

THEMAG

AIDE ET ACTION

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Special Report

VOCATIONAL TRAINING A SECOND CHANCE

 Aide et Action

Changing the world through Education

THE PHOTO ABOUT HERE AND NOW



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As the world celebrated the second International Day of Education, on 24 January 2020, Aide et Action organized a special event at the Wat Bo primary school in Siem Reap, Cambodia. For the occasion, pupils made the commitment to learn «for people, the planet, prosperity and peace». Over 100 Cambodian elementary schools were invited by Aide et Action to give their pupils time and space to reflect on this special day.

“QUALITY EDUCATION WHICH IS INCLUSIVE AND FAIR IS THE ONLY WAY TO CREATE A MORE EQUAL AND FAIRER WORLD.”

Samphors Vorn, general manager
Aide et Action Cambodia

Editorial

“Life-long learning is an essential stake for the future”



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2020 is an important turning point. First, because it marks the beginning of the last decade to achieve the sustainable development goals as defined by the United Nations in order to ensure, by 2030, peace and prosperity for people and the planet. Among these objectives, that of quality education for all is the one we particularly defend.

But 2020 also marks an evolution in the mission of Aide et Action which now focuses its support on the most vulnerable ones (especially children, girls and women), throughout life, so that they acquire knowledge - from preschool to socio-vocational training, going through primary and secondary - with the sole objective of providing each and everyone with all the same development opportunities. In addition to the projects it leads in the field, Aide et Action will support populations on their way to citizenship so that they contribute to social change at the local, both at the national and international level. These new areas of intervention will take into account climate challenges, security and migration.

Finally, 2020 marks an evolution of the lay-out of your magazine in order to give more operational information, testimonials and images, and to offer you ever more lively content. We hope that this new issue, including the special report dedicated to vocational training will entice you.

Happy reading ! With solidarity,

Charles-Emmanuel Ballanger
CEO of Aide et Action

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“I WANTED TO BECOME A BETTER MOTHER AND LEARN MORE ABOUT NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF MY CHILDREN.”

Lu Tai May,
24 years

VIETNAM

OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROJECTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN RURAL AREAS

Aide et Action is operating in isolated regions in Vietnam, on protection projects and early childhood education, for vulnerable populations, in order to promote access to quality education for those who need it the most.

Good to know Sometimes, these are apparently simple things that can make a major difference in daily life. Before, Lu kept her clothes on the floor and they became dusty and dirty. Now, she puts her clothes in a wardrobe, where they remain clean. Thus, household members benefit from a healthier environment.

Lu Tai May, 25, lives in an isolated village in Lai Chau province, in the north-west of Vietnam. Mother of two, this young woman joined the protection and early childhood education project as developed by Aide et Action a year ago. Every month she attends classes that teach the community good practices on parenting, nutrition and other topics related to building and **maintaining a safe and clean domestic environment.**

SIMPLE LESSONS WHICH MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Lu is not the only one in her family that has loved learning. Her husband also attended classes and not only takes better care of their children but is also “a better husband”, according to Lu. One of the topics covered in the courses is, indeed, gender equality and the encouragement of men

53 Like the majority of inhabitants in this region of Vietnam, Lu is an ethnic Hmong, which is one of the 53 ethnic minority groups in Vietnam.

to play a more active role as parents in sharing the domestic workload. Lu’s children who are aged six and four years, are enrolled in school respectively primary and kindergarten. “Children love to go to school every day. If I don’t take them there, they cry,” said Lu, hoping that the quality of education will continue to improve in her village and that our project will continue to teach her new things.

MARCH 8, 2020

A DAY TO FIGHT FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS

The 43rd International Women’s Day was celebrated on 8 March. The year 2020, which celebrates the 25 years of the Beijing Declaration, would have plenty to restore this date to its original features of fighting for women’s rights.

“A WOMAN SHOULD NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT OTHERS THINK OF HER.”

Aïcha Bah Diallo,
Aide et Action International President

This 8 March 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Action Program, that is, until so far, «the most progressive roadmap in empowering women and girls all over the world.» The conference from 1995 ended with a vision: a world where every woman and girl could exercise their liberties and choices and could know and understand all of their rights. An agreement was also signed between 189 states to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women all over the world.

25 YEARS LATER, OBSTACLES REMAIN

However, it is clear that gender equality, as the text intended, is still very far from being reached. No matter their country or their social level, women still suffer from gender discrimination and inequality.

AIDE ET ACTION TAKES ACTION

Aide et Action decided to accompany girls and women on the path to education, not only to bring them the know-how and knowledge they have too long been deprived of, but also to give them back a voice and allow them to claim by themselves, at any stage of their life, the whole sum of their rights. The support of Aide et Action, in partnership with expert NGOs in each sector will help them.

Their fundamental rights are too often flouted

The right to life: the birth of boys, in India for example, is privileged to those of girls; **the right to identity:** baby girls are less frequently declared to the civilian state than boys; **the right to food:** the cases of malnutrition and developmental delay affect more girls; **the right to care:** boys that are “judged » more essential are more likely to be monitored by a doctor; **the right to education:** more than 25% of interviewees today believe that “it is more important to follow university studies for boys than girls”...¹



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1- UNESCO. 2019. Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 - Gender Equality Report: Building bridges to promote gender equality. Paris, UNESCO

GUINEA

AFTER 12 YEARS OF ACTION, AIDE ET ACTION IS PLEASED TO SEE STRENGTHENING OF CIVIL SOCIETY



© Catherine Choquet

On Monday 20 January took place the official closing day of the Concerted Capacity Building Program for Guinean Civil Society and Youth Organizations (PROJEG) in Paris. The opportunity to look back on 12 years of action in Guinea and take stock of it more than conclusively!

Aide et Action has been the leader of the Concerted Capacity Building Program for Civil Society and Guinean Youth Organizations (PROJEG), supported - among others - by the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs (MEAE). This space for consultation and collective work, where more than 500 organizations from civil societies and state authorities gathered both Guinean and French audiences, is intended to strengthen development and peace in Guinea.

KEY ISSUES AND SUBJECTS FOR GUINEA

"We have worked on issues and flagship subjects for Guinea, such as corruption, youth, human rights and the rule of law, as well as the mines," specifies Sonia Vinolas, coordinator of PROJEG France. "It's real luck that the project could have lasted 12 years because that allowed us to structure the action and go further. We have achieved great results, great successes and great changes. But the most impressive above all is the evolution of stakeholders who have grown from year to year. We take genuine pride in this."

16 000

This is the number of people affected by the program during those 12 years and who were thus able to get organized in order to influence decisions made by public authorities on fundamental subjects.

16,000 This is the number of people affected by the program during those 12 years and who were thus able to get organized in order to influence decisions made by public authorities on fundamental subjects.

Thanks to the support of PROJEG, more than 50 proposals were made by civil society to improve the new Mining Code; a consultation platform entitled "The Social Movement" was launched; monitoring of and advocacy on democracy and the rule of law were implemented; and finally prevention actions regarding community conflicts, and others aimed at supporting consortia of organizations in the case documentation of human rights violations have been carried out.

TRANSLATING BEST PRACTICES INTO EQUALITY AND RESPECT

In all of its areas of work, PROJEG encouraged the expression of youth and its active participation within Guinean society. "Now the last and perhaps most important thing to do is to ensure that the dynamic continues. Today the program comes to an end, but the stakeholders themselves will continue to be in touch and to work", concludes Sonia Vinolas. 🌱

"STAKEHOLDERS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY, INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BECOME KEY PLAYERS IN POLICIES IN THE NOBLE SENSE OF THE TERM. THEY HAVE BECOME LEGITIMATE AND NOW BENEFIT FROM A LISTENING EAR AND RECOGNITION."

Moctar Diallo

Aide et Action General Manager in Guinea and PROJEG coordinator

Vocational training A second chance



With less than 40% of adolescents completing secondary school and the weakness, if not the total absence, of vocational training for adults around the world, many young people find themselves without a diploma or qualification, without any means to live, to support their family and integrate socially. Confronted with this situation, Aide et Action is developing vocational training programs in countries of intervention, that are destined to young people, especially women and the most underprivileged ones.

© Omar Havana / Aide et Action

“The Sustainable Development Goal number 8 is not just about full employment, but also about quality employment. Equality and decent work are two of the pillars on which sustainable development is based.”

Deborah Greenfield
Deputy Director General for Policy of the
International Labour Organization

Vocational training A still underestimated opportunity for development

20%
This is the percentage of young people under the age of 25 years who in 2020 are out of school, or unemployed and uneducated.

750 MILLION
This is the number of people in countries of low and middle income who will not have the skills in 2030 to participate in the economy of tomorrow.

200 MILLION
It's the number of young people worldwide who leave school without the necessary skills to climb the social ladder.

Sources: UNESCO and Save The Children, 2019

These days, 20% of young people under the age of 25 are either out of school or unemployed or not trained. This alarming situation involves significant risks in building inclusive and sustainable societies. For Aide et Action, to offer individuals the possibility of lifelong learning is an absolute necessity.

Youth unemployment rates always remain high and the transition between school and working life becomes increasingly difficult, a growing numbers of young people are neither students, nor employed, nor in training. Often from disadvantaged backgrounds, they find themselves victims of a vicious circle leading to deterioration of skills, underemployment and discouragement.

DECENT WORK FOR ALL
However, among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to which 193 heads of state committed to achieve by 2030, objective number 8 is to “promote sustained, shared economic and sustainable growth, as well as full productive employment and decent work for all.”

Definition
Vocational training is the process of learning that allows an individual to acquire knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills that are necessary to exercise of a trade or a professional activity.

This promotes, among other things, the development of training opportunities and employment for new generations. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are regions experiencing strong growth demographics, and this is where the need for vocational training

is the most significant. This is why Aide et Action is developing in these areas training offers for young people, especially for women and the most underprivileged ones. The goal is to allow these men and women to acquire the basic knowledge and skills useful for their social and economic insertion, and to access vocational training which is adapted to the local job market.

“IT IS THE WISH OF AIDE ET ACTION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE HAS THE POSSIBILITY TO DEVELOP HIS/HER FULL POTENTIAL”

They will thus be able to exercise decent quality employment and break the circle of poverty. They will thus be able to exercise decent quality employment and break the circle of poverty. It is the wish of Aide et Action to participate in the construction of a world where everyone has the opportunity to develop his/her full potential thanks to access to education and learning of quality. Throughout our special report, discover how we are trying to defend this need for lifelong education, so that everyone can enjoy a second chance and build a fairer and more prosperous future. 🍀

Vocational training

A way out of the informal economy

Aide et Action has been developing a significant vocational training program in South Asia since 2005. It is called "iLEAD" (Initiative for Livelihood Education and Development) and it offers a saving alternative for thousands of young unskilled people. In 15 years, more than 243,000 people have gone through our training centres and professional integration that offer qualifying training for 3 months for free. A unique opportunity in India, for example, where the population is extremely young and these days has the highest unemployment rate in its history.

243,039

This is the total number of people trained since the creation of iLEAD program in 2005.

176,505

This is the total number of people, who have successfully integrated professionally, either as employees, or as self-employed workers.

105,844

It's the total number of women who participated in this program in India, in Nepal, Sri Lanka and in Bhutan.

Informal Economy Any economic activity carried out by workers or economic units which is not covered or is insufficiently covered - according to law or practice - by official provisions

India is currently facing the highest unemployment rate ever achieved in its history (6.1%). And young people are among the most affected (12%). Many of them, without diplomas or qualification, then find themselves exercising small activities in the **informal economy**. It's to get these young people out of the vicious circle of poverty that Aide et Action opened as soon as 2005 around fifty vocational training centres spread in all States of India. The concept: offer young people, aged 18 to 30 and having at least reached the end of primary school, to follow training for 3 months (8 hours of lessons per day, 6 days a week) in such varied fields such as sewing, aesthetics, mechanics, hotel service, tourism, accounting or even IT.

QUICK AND QUALIFYING TRAINING
«A young person who integrates iLEAD training is a young individual who does not bring in money for several months. Parents don't always let them come, «says English professor Sonia in one of the six iLEAD vocational training centres opened by Aide et Action in the city of Chennai, in India.» Our awareness team is working in the streets, in the neighbourhoods and are in direct contact with young people and families to present them the program and its opportunities. Training costs nothing: equipment is provided to them, but they still have to pay for transportation to come and bring their meal. But this constitutes a lesser sacrifice for these young people that are eager and happy to learn and find a

TODAY, ILEAD PROVIDES EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING AND TRAINING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN MORE THAN 40 TRADES.»

job more easily which may allow them to earn up to 8,000 rupees (around 103 euros) per month.»

A JOB AND A FIXED SALARY AT STAKE

«Students have very different levels, some can read and write very well but others have more trouble. Then, week after week, thanks to the intensive work of the teams, the level improves. We teach them to produce documents, to print, sometimes even to create and manage websites. You have to know how to adapt and above all manage to interest the pupils. We must have a very practical education, to enact a situation; it is an interesting job to develop alternative pedagogies, «explains Sonia. This working time is also an opportunity for our teams to raise awareness among young people to societal issues and citizenship; to encourage them to become agents of change in their communities. In total, since 2005, more than 176,000 young people have been trained by Aide et Action teams and placed, at the end of their training, in partner companies of the project. »



My name is Jamesh, I'm 23 years old. I belong to a fairly poor community and, until then, I didn't have a job because I lacked diplomas and skills. And then one day I met someone from the iLEAD team who convinced me to come and follow the computer program. The training is not that difficult, you have to focus but I know that the time spent studying will be very helpful. I hope afterwards I could work in a call centre.»



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Vocational training Transformed life paths

Through our different projects, find out how socio-vocational training and integration allow individuals to get out of poverty and to gain in autonomy. By acquiring skills essential to their emancipation, young adults, hitherto doomed to a difficult future, have the opportunity to sustainably transform their lives.

The vision of Aide et Action

Is to develop and encourage all educational actions which guarantee that young adults acquire knowledge and skills required to live their lives in dignity. In order to make sure no one is left to account for we wish to offer ongoing learning to marginalized groups so that they have the necessary skills to adapt and follow the fast evolution of companies in the era of globalization. Our actions aim to build resilient skills while respecting diversity in all its forms. Aide et Action now grants particular attention to the opportunities that allow individuals to train and to fine-tune skills throughout their life.

SATRUPA, HAS BECOME A MECHANIC FOR TWO-WHEEL VEHICLES

India Satrupa, 23, did not have a chance to study. For lack of qualification, she had no professional activity and could not contribute to family income. But, thanks to Aide et Action, she was able to change things by enrolling in an automobile mechanics course provided by our iLEAD program. This decision transformed her life. After a complete training, she is nowadays mechanic for two-wheel vehicles and also owns her own garage. She managed to change the mentalities in her community by proving that a woman could exercise this activity and earn a good living with a salary of 10,000 to 12,000 rupees per month (128 to 153 euros per month).



Satrupa has managed to change mentalities in her community by proving that a woman could become a mechanic.

MARIE, HAS BECOME AUTONOMOUS THANKS TO THE PRODUCTION OF RICE

Burkina Faso In rural areas, women face extreme poverty and have difficult access to production facilities. To promote their empowerment, Aide et Action, in collaboration with the foundation L'Occitane, is developing a project that combines literacy, technical training and financial support. Among the women supported, Marie who lives in Sapouy, was trained in the rice steaming process. This income-generating activity allows her to get out of precariousness and to assert herself more. «I have more self-confidence. It's like I exist even more than before, » she says.



Steaming rice is an income-generating activity which allows Marie to get out of precariousness and to assert herself.



Despite the sacrifices that this entailed, Lila decided to register believing it was worth it for his professional future.

LILA OPENED HIS WORKSHOP TO REPAIR MOBILE PHONES

Nepal Lila has a shop in the area of the Kusmishera market. For a long time, he wanted to add a mobile phone repair centre in his workshop to increase his income, but he did not have the necessary skills. One day he heard about a training to repair mobiles in Baglung Bazar delivered by the association Aasaman Nepal with the support of Aide et Action. Despite the sacrifices this entailed, he decided to register considering that it was worth the effort for his professional future. Today, perfectly trained, he is finally able to open his own workshop and its activity continues to increase.



Even though she had no professional perspective, Mariama realized she had a second chance.

MARIAMA WANTS TO BECOME A SEAMSTRESS AND MAKE HER OWN CLOTHING

Senegal In the village of Saré-Yoba, in the south-east of the country, Aide et Action has set up a training whose objective is to meet needs of the local labour market. Mariama, 22, follows a sewing course with the aim of taking back her life in her own hands. After leaving school, she had no professional perspective. But with the arrival of the centre everything changed: she realized that a second chance was free and dreams today of becoming a professional seamstress and make her own clothes.

IN CONCLUSION, A STAKE FOR THE FUTURE

These many examples illustrate the importance of vocational training as a vector of change. Having the opportunity to reinvent, to train throughout life is an absolute necessity. In 2016, the Organization of International Labour reported 64 million young unemployed people worldwide and 145 million young workers living in poverty.

Decent youth employment remains a global challenge and a major concern. That is why Aide et Action has made this theme an axis of work priority. By making vocational training accessible to the greatest number, we not only provide an answer to unemployment but above all an essential key towards more social and human progress.

To close this special report, we'll share with you this declaration by Ms. Guiomar Alonso, representative of the Director of the UNESCO Regional Office, in Dakar, in December 2019: **"A country amputated from its living force and youth, mortgages its future and compromises its chances to development."** This is why we value that socio-professional integration of young people and women is a real stake for the future and that's why we act every day.

GUINEA Encouraging girls to go to school

Our Girls-Friendly School Project responds to three problems that the country faces: low education of girls in rural areas, a high school dropout rate, and insufficient involvement of communities and parents in the management of school. For this reason, Aide et Action acts to give children

with disabilities the opportunity to learn and build another life, but also to reintegrate into society and school systems. For this, **we are developing adapted educational offers such as integrated classes where we develop a favorable school environment to educate girls** and keep them in school.

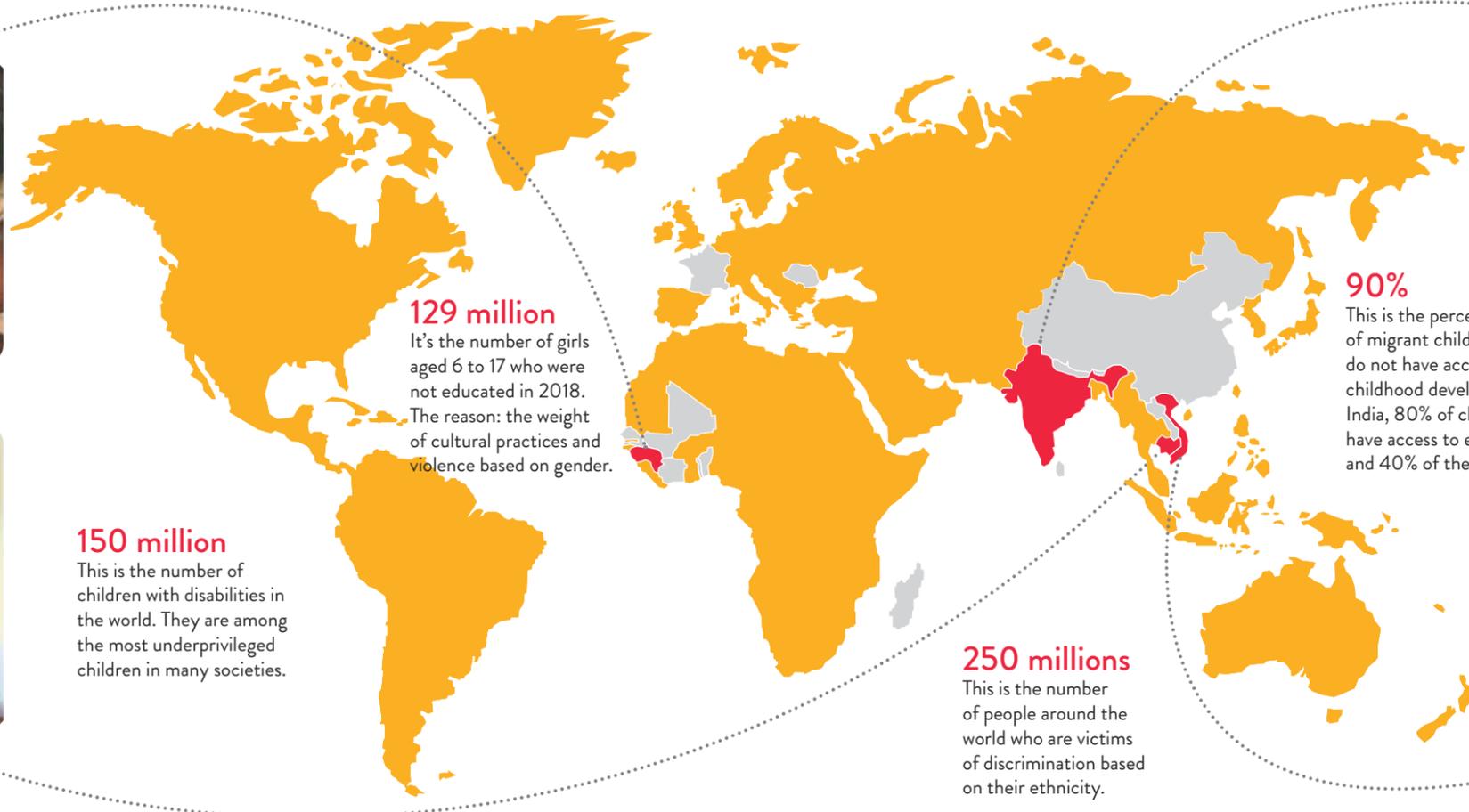
Good to know Worldwide only two out of three countries have achieved parity in primary education.



© Olivier Harrasowski / Aide et Action



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INDIA Taking action for migrant children

Almost 100 million people are considered seasonal migrant workers. Among them, 10 to 15 million are children who find themselves in a situation of extreme vulnerability. Aide et Action has been working since 2009 to actively **take care of these children** and exercise their right to

education. Thanks to the establishment of centres dedicated to early childhood care, we strive to provide hospitality services as well as uninterrupted education. For this, we are developing adapted learning materials and programs.

Good to know Our program is mainly aimed at children of vulnerable migrants who work in brickyards and construction sites.



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90%
This is the percentage of migrant children who do not have access to childhood development in India, 80% of children don't have access to education and 40% of them work.

CAMBODIA Inclusive education for all

Aide et Action takes action to give the opportunity to children with **disabilities to learn** and build another life, but also to reintegrate into society and school systems. For this, we are developing adapted educational offers such as integrated classes where we develop a favorable

school environment where children benefit from specific teaching methods thanks to which they can hope to return to the regular school system. **Creating an inclusive learning environment is essential** so that all children, without exception, can study and realize their full potential.

Good to know About 15% of the world population lives with a handicap. This has a greater impact in vulnerable populations.

VIETNAM Strengthening teachers' skills

Aide et Action works in isolated regions with teachers to strengthen their teaching skills. In Lai Chau province, for example, our project is **to train teachers on how to provide quality education** to children from ethnic minorities.

Indeed, these are faced with a **communication problem** since the mother tongue of pupils is Hmong but the curriculum is taught in Vietnamese. In just one year, supported teams are already witnessing progress!

Good to know Within these ethnic minorities, most parents of pupils are illiterate which prevents them from helping their children with their homework.

Vulnerable and marginalized children

Aide et Action is committed so that they are no longer excluded from education

By Vanessa Martin, in charge of advocacy at Aide et Action.

Education for all is unlikely to be achieved by 2030, and more than 200 million children will be left behind unaccounted for. Confronted with this observation, Aide et Action is mobilizing and rethinking its mission to support the most vulnerable of them on their path to education.

Five years ago commitment was taken to reach universal education by 2030. However, it is undeniable that this promise, then made by 193 heads of state and gathered in New York at the United Nations, was very likely not to be fulfilled. And for good reasons: the situation on the education front has hardly improved since 2015. The number of children excluded from education stagnates at 258 million children and should drop by 32 million in 2030 if the current trend continues; the number of teachers trained worldwide in 2017 fell by 1.5%, while the world lacks, according to the United Nations, nearly 69 million teachers to reach education for all. These two

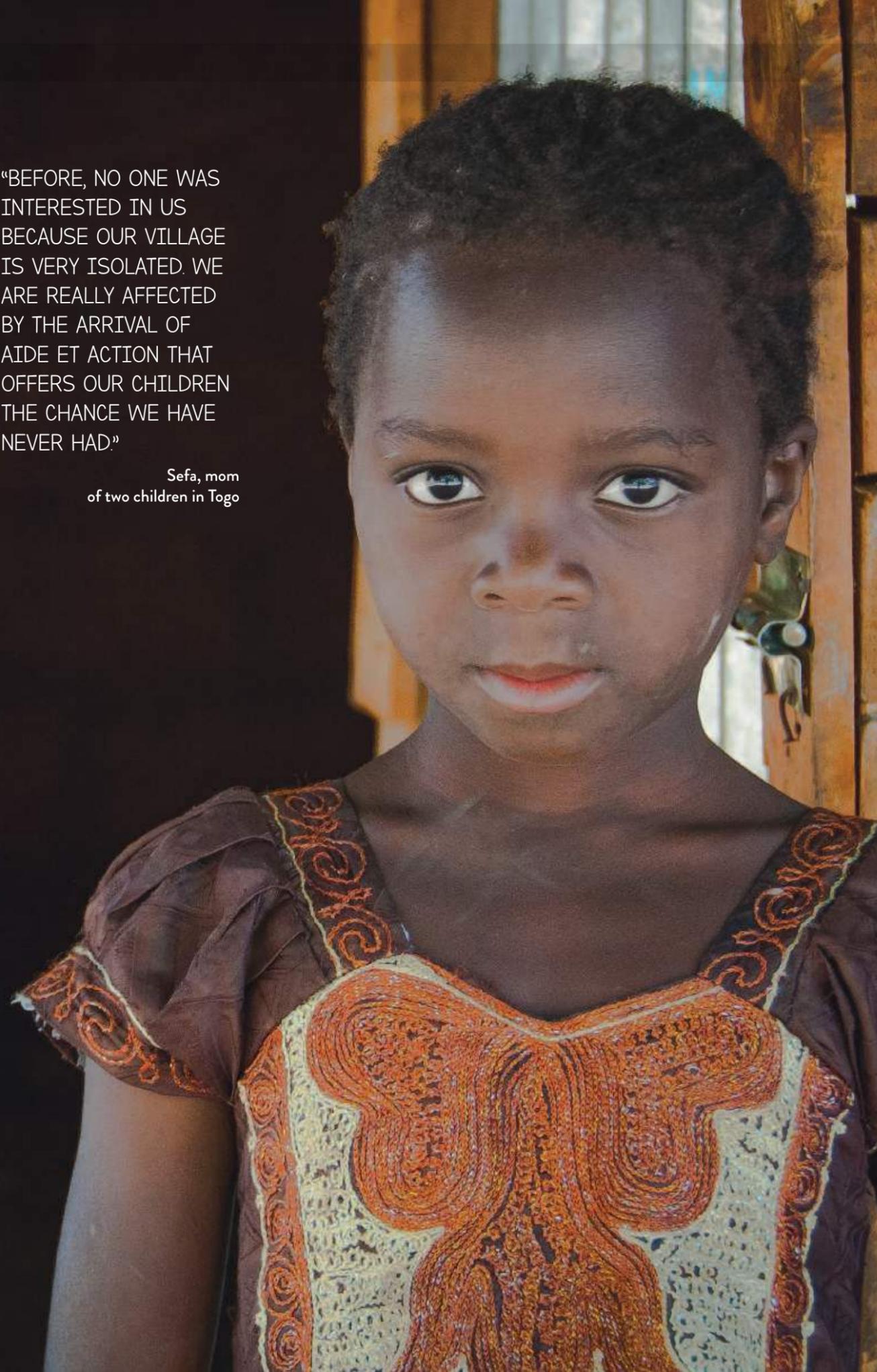
examples reveal a background trend that is a lot more dramatic: many governments have put in place contradictory policies to reach education for all by maintaining difficult working conditions for teachers and educational staff (short-term contracts, unsafe working conditions, heavy workload and low wages), by authorizing privatization of growing systems in education, and cutting sometimes drastically within education budgets.

53%

c'est is the percentage of children in the countries which are little and moderately developed who cannot read fluently at the age of 10 years. (UNICEF)

"BEFORE, NO ONE WAS INTERESTED IN US BECAUSE OUR VILLAGE IS VERY ISOLATED. WE ARE REALLY AFFECTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF AIDE ET ACTION THAT OFFERS OUR CHILDREN THE CHANCE WE HAVE NEVER HAD."

Sefa, mom of two children in Togo



© William Davies / Aide et Action

700 MILLION

This the number of children left behind, deprived of well-being and socio-economic rights in the world according to the report "A second revolution: 30 years of children's rights and an unfinished agenda." (Joining Forces)

EDUCATION AT RISK

A recent UNICEF study, («Addressing the learning crisis / An urgent need to better finance education for the poorest children»), indeed reveals that many countries, including developed ones, are very far from allocating to education the minimum 20% of expenses and from 4 to 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (two minima recommended by the UNESCO). The immediate consequence: a dramatic impact on the poorest and most marginalized children. The distribution of expenses in state education remains predominantly inequitable: children, belonging to the quintile of the poorest households, receive only 10% of the expenses in state education. In Guinea and in the Central African Republic, for example, they only receive 5% and 8% of public spending on education, barely 9% in Senegal and Cameroon while the richest children receive 8.9 times more money in Guinea than the poorest children, 6.2 times more in the Central African Republic and 4.6 times more in Senegal. The most developed countries do a little better: 18.6% of public expenditure in education goes to the top 20% of poor children while 21.7% goes to the richest ones.

>

THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK

Inequality, once again, can be seen and generalized, and is doomed to an education of poor quality, derelict education and poverty of millions of children whose path to education is already sown with pitfalls. To remedy this is therefore absolutely urgent, and yet a government response is long overdue. Faced with such a challenge, Aide et Action



© Christine Redmond / Aide et Action

has chosen this year to rethink and redirect its mission so to accompany those on the path to education for the most vulnerable children, those whose rights, and more specifically the right to education, are systematically flouted. We call on states to continue their commitment to education for all, by giving priority to underprivileged and marginalized children, and ask to allocate public resources effectively in a way that allows school enrolment of the most vulnerable and marginalized children. 🍀

France

An evening of debate so that children's rights become a priority

The Childhood Group, which brings together 18 member organizations among which Aide et Action, pleads for children's rights to become a priority for France. An evening of discussion and debate was organized on 6 February to convince politicians to realize the importance of the subject!

Today we're talking at all levels, it's a transversal priority from France, and how to make sure the same goes for children's rights? "Launches Laura Le Floch, Childhood Group advocacy advisor to a hundred representatives of NGOs, of the Agency for French Development (AFD) and the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), gathered for "Objective Childhood 2020". This evening of exchanges, organized on 6 February 2020 by the Childhood Group with support from AFD, focused on "the prospects of the international policy of France in terms of human rights of the child".

FRANCE IS DRAGGING ITS FEET REGARDING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Stéphane Durin, Associate Director at ENEIS by KPMG which conducted a study on the subject since October 2019 says "When asked if France is strengthening children's

rights through its programs? ", We don't have the tools today to answer them. Children's rights are little taken into account in texts and framing of French policies. It is however imperative that they become a national priority, that this translates into strategic documents and that we create financial tools, indicators to follow the funding which may have an impact on children's rights."

"The results of this study are not really a surprise", explains Antoine Boudou, Company staff editor at the MEAE. "This inventory had never been done, so this is a good working basis. Today the MEAE has implemented a "human rights and development strategy" which is a first step, a change of method: we go from charity to the rights-based approach. It is an advocacy job that we carry jointly with civil society and that we will take into account in our improvement policies ..."

An essential stake for Aide et Action

Being a woman today shouldn't be an obstacle!

By supporting our actions in favour of women and their empowerment, you allow action for more equality and social justice around the world. Even today, girls are under-represented in access to education and training and women are, in fact, penalized in terms of employment opportunities. It is time that this changes!

487 MILLION

This is the number of illiterate women in the world; that is two thirds of the total population of illiterate people. This alarming figure is a reflection of a sad reality: in many societies, being a woman represents, even today, an obstacle, a difficulty, a disadvantage. Parity in education has not been reached only by less than two in three countries in primary education, by one in two countries in lower secondary and by one in four countries in upper secondary education.

RESTORING SOME SOCIAL JUSTICE

Because this observation highlights that more women with pregnancies and early marriages are dependent on precarious trades, as well as suffer from violence and violations of their rights. For Aide et Action educating girls and women is an absolute priority. Indeed, every year spent by a girl on school benches increases her future



© Naiside Plante / Aide et Action

income by 10 to 20%. If we increase by 10% girls' attendance at school each year the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country increases in average by 3%. Among the projects that we develop, vocational training offers a second chance to women

without education, and thus allows to restore a certain social justice (see our "Special Report"). Supporting women on the path to knowledge is equivalent to guiding them on the way to equality, freedom and active citizenship.

STARK INEQUALITY REGARDING EMPLOYMENT

In 2019, women were overrepresented in vulnerable jobs and in the informal sector. They are today paid overall 23% less than men. This situation does not allow them to break out of the vicious circle of inequality in which they are sometimes immersed

from their birth. This is why Aide et Action works for women's access to economic opportunities suited to their development, especially through vocational training and support to entrepreneurship.



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"EDUCATION FOR WOMEN NOW" THE NEW FLAGSHIP CAMPAIGN BY AIDE ET ACTION

Aide et Action's international fundraising campaign, "Education for Women Now", is the embodiment of this fight for a world without gender inequalities. Its objective is to raise 20 million euro over the next 5 years to support access to quality education for girls and women. We initiate this fight where we have developed our expertise for almost 40 years: at the gates of school and education, where we can deconstruct step by step gender stereotypes that are rooted in communities.



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SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES

Amali is 28 years old and lives in Sri Lanka. A few months ago, she signed up for the vocational training program iLEAD. "The certificate issued by iLEAD after finishing our studies is very important, because it opens many employment opportunities for people like us," says the young lady. Today, Amali works as an accountant in one of the largest food companies in the country.



"When we put in the front line those who are the least heard, the least visible - whether they are individuals or hundreds of millions of workers in the informal sector which currently are not listened to, or so little [...] - we tackle the most deep-seated social issues and we can see the progress made that we want."

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka,
Deputy Secretary-General
of the United Nations and Executive Director
of UN Women



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TOWARDS MORE AUTONOMY

In Burkina Faso, we are developing a project, in partnership with the L'Occitane Foundation, to accompany women towards more autonomy. Rosine Traoré, Aide et Action Director in Burkina Faso, details: "As a woman, I find this project very important. The majority of women in Burkina Faso did not have the chance to go to school. What is learned and acquired through our project serves to meet the needs of the family



RUKMINI RAO



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Elected woman of the year by the Indian magazine “The Week” in 2014, Rukmini RAO is a key activist for the rights of women in India. For Aide et Action, of which she joined the Board of International Directors in 2011, she talks about her project “The Gramya resource centre”, supported by our association.

Rukmini RAO, essential figure in women’s rights

Aide et Action: What is the Gramya resource centre?

Rukmini Rao: The Gramya Resource Centre was established in 1993 to promote the rights of women and girls. One of our programs consisted of providing education to children workers through residential schools. We hosted a hundred young girls, ages 9-14, from the Lambadi community, an indigenous community, very much frowned upon by Indian society and victims of forced displacements. The parents are marginalized and cannot offer decent living conditions to their children. Therefore, they entrust them to

us. In addition to boarding school, we carry out awareness activities and reception of children in 15 villages. All these activities are carried out by volunteers: 2 men and 14 women, many of whom have suffered from discrimination themselves, based on the castes, towards women.

AEA: Where did you get the idea for such a program?

R•R• : In 1997, a friend and myself received an anonymous phone call to warn us that baby girls were about to be killed and that many little girls disappeared in the Hyderabad area, in India.

We immediately intervened and could save 2 babies aged only 9 days. We immediately requested an investigation from the government and it found that the murders of little girls were very common and known to all in the region.

AEA: How did you fight against such discrimination?

R•R• : To protect young girls, we thought giving them access to education was the only solution. So we called upon the government to reopen all schools that were largely dysfunctional in the region. We organize evening classes ourselves. We have also created mothers committees, in a dozen villages at the start, in order to make women stronger and more autonomous. It was not easy at first because the women themselves refused this kind of initiative.... And then mentalities have changed: today’s girls are no longer married before the age of 18, against 12 previously, and they are less forced to work. Of course, all is not rosy. Today, there is a glaring lack of girls compared to boys (per 1,000 boys under 6 years old, only 834 girls survive). It is therefore established that girls will have to pay so they can marry. Having a daughter is therefore perceived as a burden. Women and wives are often punished and abused. The psychological impact for all these women is terrible and we have to work with them to rebuild their confidence and fight against gender stereotypes. My goal and that of our organization is gender equality and justice for all. These are very long-term goals and much remains to be done. 🌱