

ESSF solidarity activity report 2022

Tuesday 24 January 2023, by [ESSF](#), [NOVAK Adam](#), [ROUSSET Pierre](#) (Date first published: 31 December 2022).

The year 2022 was as exceptional as 2021. Geostrategic conflicts have become more complex and deeper. The consequences of the climate-ecological crisis have been particularly devastating. Popular resistances of a rare magnitude have asserted themselves. International attention has been focused on Ukraine, then Iran. We have actively taken these upheavals into account, while ensuring the continuation of our own solidarity campaigns in Asia.

We present below a general assessment of our activities in 2022, which includes a financial assessment, but not only. We also present the development of our website and our solidarity commitments in a series of international campaigns.

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Our association has tried to respond to these developments as best it could, while ensuring the continuity of solidarity in the geographical area for which it is responsible. In particular, we feared that the financial support we provide to our Asian partners would be affected by the priority, perfectly justified, given by many people to the Ukrainian resistance. This has not been the case: in only 6 months we have been able to collect almost as many donations as the previous year. Thank you to all those who have contributed, because it was not won in advance.

We begin this activity report with a summary financial report, before dealing with our site's coverage of current events or fundraising issues, and then addressing ESSF's involvement in various campaigns and solidarity initiatives. In a second step, we present the use of the funds collected country by country.

A summary financial assesment for the year 2022

ESSF has provided financial assistance in five countries:

Bangladesh, with the farmers' associations BKF-BKS-BAS and the movements with which they are allied - in particular, concerning the trade union movement, BSF.

Burma, in support of the resistance.

Indonesia, with the association Free Women as a partner.

Pakistan, with partners Crofter Foundation (CF) and Labour Education Foundation (LEF).

The Philippines, with the Mihands coalition and its member organizations as partners.

In 2022, there were no interventions with specific partners in these or other countries.

We were supposed to launch a financial appeal at the end of February, but the Putin invasion of Ukraine started shortly before that was done. We preferred to wait, so that our appeal would not “compete” with those launched on the left in support of the Ukrainian resistance. However, the need for solidarity in Asia did not lose any of its urgency. The extreme violence of the war in Ukraine could not make us forget the extreme violence of the war waged by the military junta against the people of Burma, since the military putsch of February 2021 - nor the seriousness of the situation in other countries of the region.

As the war in Ukraine is a long term issue, **we launched an appeal on June 12, with an ambitious objective: to collect in one semester as much as during the whole previous year**, whereas the collection of 2021 had been very important (the Burmese resistance having provoked an impulse of solidarity).

This objective was almost reached in three stages: the response to the June 12 appeal was impressive; the same was true after the unprecedentedly severe floods in Pakistan (a specific appeal was launched on August 30); and finally, the annual appeal for the Permanent Solidarity Fund made it possible to balance the budget (with the help of the permanent and occasional payments that arrive throughout the year)

In 2022, we were able to transfer 55,500 € to our partners, only slightly less than in 2021 (56,370 €).

We had €12,370 in cash on January 5, 2023, compared to €16,000 in cash on January 5, 2022, or nearly €4,000 less.

Nevertheless, we have the possibility to re-establish a reserve of 7.000 € (to be able to react to emergencies, while waiting for the results of a call for donations) while financially supporting the activity of our partners at the beginning of the year 2022 (additional donations are indeed expected in January).

Donations come in particular from France and other European countries (Germany, Belgium, Spain, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia...), from Canada, Quebec and the United States, and from Japan.

With exceptional years as the new standard, we must consolidate and continue to expand the base of donors in 2023 to ensure that our financial solidarity is maintained.

Our website is evolving

Our bilingual website was created in 2006. It now contains more than 60,000 pages, which constitutes a considerable database on a wide range of subjects, half in French and half in English. It is intended to be a useful tool for all those who fight for a world of solidarity and offers, to this end, articles on current affairs or background, expert opinions and documents, elements for debate, etc. For several years, a permanent work of reorganization of the website has been pursued (it will never be finished!) to make it more functional.

Not all issues and regions of the world are treated equally. On the one hand, we do not publish in Spanish, Arabic, etc. On the other hand, we have particularly close links in Asia, as well as in some French or English speaking countries (in Europe, USA...). However, we try to compensate for these imbalances, depending on current events.

Thus, the coverage of Eastern Europe has developed considerably over the past ten years: information and analysis on the former USSR, on Western and Russian neo-colonial ambitions towards the former Soviet republics... Regarding Ukraine, the focus has been, since 2014, on the social and political dynamics maidan/anti-maidan, the emergence of a new left, the feminist and ecological currents, the current generation of historians. This “refocusing” has obviously accelerated after the invasion of the country in February 2022. To date, ESSF offers 1200 articles on Ukraine and 800 on Russia (including the anti-war movement), Belarus and the South Caucasus.

Our website allows us to report on the activities of many movements and to build solidarity with them, as well as to initiate or participate in activist campaigns (see below). We have also better systematized the analysis of LGBTQ+ issues and their struggle in a growing number of countries, and increased the number of geopolitical articles.

The themes addressed have also broadened. Health issues have taken a central place, following the Covid 19 pandemic, as it was previously the case for feminist and ecological issues. In areas such as climate, ecology and health, we publish articles by researchers to link knowledge, expertise and commitment, and to help everyone understand how best to protect themselves from health risks.

Other themes would have deserved to be mentioned here, but we cannot be exhaustive...

A major effort has been made to develop our newsletters, which have been diversified according to regions and themes [\[1\]](#)

Our collaborative commitments

In Asia-Pacific

ESSF is a member of the Asia-Europe People’s Forum (AEPF) and we participate in various initiatives initiated within it.

We regularly co-sign appeals in solidarity with struggles and rights, against repression, initiated by an Asia-Pacific network led by the Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM).

We benefit from enlarged and strengthened links with Chinese activists (who had to leave Hong Kong) or of Chinese origin and from the development of progressive websites dedicated to China or Asia. Exchanges with people involved in various capacities on the “Chinese question” have become more and more dense.

We are interested in collaborating with other organizations in our campaigns in Asia - especially in defense of the repressed movements and to strengthen the financial solidarity we can provide. We also participate in collective initiatives outside of our own geographical area of responsibility.

Beyond South and East Asia

We wanted to respond to two of the major events of the year 2022: the invasion of Ukraine and the Iranian uprising.

Ukraine. We have given a nodal place to Ukraine on our website. As a result, ESSF is a founding member of the Editorial Solidarity Brigades, as well as the network of solidarity editors of the progressive Ukrainian journal *Spilne* (“Commons”). Many of the editors and key contributors to our website are part of the European Solidarity Network Ukraine (ESNU).

Iran. In the wake of the uprising, our site’s coverage of Iran has grown considerably. The “Iran”

sections (in French and English) now include more than 550 articles, offering analysis and historical background to support the development of solidarity. On a more militant level, we have strengthened our links with the association Socialist Solidarity with the Workers in Iran (SSTI). We have relayed on our site their appeal for donations [\[2\]](#), which can be collected via our bank account (more than 2.000 € to date).

We are also helping to gather signatures for a declaration of solidarity initiated by the SSTI [\[3\]](#) and we will support and publicize solidarity initiatives, strengthening the progressive camp.

North Africa and Middle East

As our association is based in France, we have been solicited by movements on both sides of the Mediterranean for calls in defense of the vital rights of migrants, prisoners of conscience and democratic movements in North Africa. We obviously responded, even though this was outside our own Asian field of competence.

In addition to our engagement on Iran, we also try to maintain a reactive follow-up on Egypt and, especially, on Sudan, a center of popular struggles whose importance is too often ignored.

A special mention on health issues

The health field is the one we have “deployed” most recently, as the health and health systems crisis has worsened sharply with the Covid-19 pandemic. We have opened it to the follow-up of other epidemics, always with the concern of combining political analysis and medical information: various respiratory infections, AIDS, monkeypox, measles, zika, antibiotic resistance, dengue, tuberculosis, poliomyelitis... (all the diseases mentioned here are not necessarily treated in both languages, at least for the moment).

We obviously maintain our commitment to the “Stop Patents on Vaccines, Requisition!” campaign, in which we participated since the beginning. It demands the lifting of patents on Covid vaccines and the implementation of a health policy that allows countries in the South to produce and use them in the best possible conditions. The Covid pandemic is far from over, as evidenced by the explosion of infections in China, where the regime has gone from a ZeroCovid policy carried out in tyrannical forms, to a brutal, unprepared lifting of almost all protective measures. In the United States, a new sub-variant of Omicron is taking hold and the epidemic is growing.

Solidarity

What concept of solidarity? This is a fundamental issue that has been raised with acuity on the occasion of the Ukrainian and Taiwanese crises. Our conception is simple: we defend the victims and we do not abandon them in the name of geopolitical considerations, we support their right to freely decide their future and, when this is the question, their right to self-determination.

Each power chooses the victims that suit it and abandons the others. We refuse to enter into this type of “camp” logic. We defend the rights of the Kanaks in Kanaky, whatever Paris thinks, the Syrians and the peoples of Syria in the face of the implacable dictatorship of the Assad clan, the Ukrainians under the deluge of Russian fire, the Puerto Ricans under the US colonial order, the Haitians who are denied protection and asylum by the so-called “international community”.

We find ourselves in the company of progressive movements around the world that reject the logic of “the main enemy”. We are not in the camp of any great power, be it Japanese-Western, Russian or Chinese. In this field in particular, we appreciate in France the contribution of Cedetim, the quality of the information provided by the blog “Entre les lignes entre les mots”, the commitment of the

Editions Syllepse or the activities of the International Trade Union Network of Solidarity and Struggle.

Synthetic assessments by country

The donations we receive can be dedicated to a country or an organization, or paid into the Permanent Solidarity Fund, which allows us to send aid immediately after a disaster (the solidarity campaign allows us to replenish this fund later); to cover the deficit of specific solidarity campaigns in case there is one; to follow up on prolonged aid; to provide aid when the conditions of a specific solidarity campaign are not met.

Our partners in Asia have to deal with the violence of established powers, which can take several forms depending on the time, region and country: dictatorial regimes, landowners, extremist fundamentalist movements..., violence that can go as far as total war (Burma). We must take this into account so as not to put them in even greater danger.

BANGLADESH

Contributions sent via the movements BKF (farmers, men), BKS (farmers, women), BAS (indigenous) and the trade union federation BSF.

These movements had to respond in 2022 to new situations of crisis caused by natural disasters (cyclones, floods, etc.) in several regions. They mobilized for food security and defended the peasants occupying vast sandbanks that emerge in the arms of rivers. These lands are in the public domain, but landowners are trying to take them over through violence. On November 30, Bakul Begum, leader of a landless cooperative and wife of a BKF cadre, was stabbed to death. Her sister, Mukul Begum, was seriously injured and hospitalized.

Total for the year 2022: 10,000 €

Total Bangladesh (2011-2022) : 67.329 €

BURMA (MYANMAR)

The military putsch of February 1, 2021 could have been aborted because the popular response (civic strike) was so broad and immediate. For this to happen, international support and sanctions would have to be consistent, which was not the case. The government is waging a total war, particularly "dirty", against the resisting population, developing its air force and means of detection, benefiting from the help of Russia and China. We initially conceived our financial support as a one-off, but we are now making it a long-term commitment. The aid is distributed at the borders, through our contacts in the region. In a very fluid war situation, involving very diverse actors, they are the only ones who know what can be done at any given time. Many regional and international solidarity movements are active on the border and cooperate with each other.

Total for the year 2022: 4,500 €

Total Burma (2021-2022) : 10.920 €

INDONESIA

The association Free Women is based in an industrial area of Jakarta where it helps textile workers defend their rights, particularly in terms of maternity, as employers often dismiss them when they

are pregnant. It conducts education programs and responds to epidemics. It participates in various coalitions during natural disasters. In 2022, it intervened in Sukabumi, again with textile workers, on the fight against domestic violence, in an ideological environment that is increasingly hostile due to the pressure exerted by fundamentalist movements.

Total for the year 2022: 4,300 €

Total Free Women (2016-2021) : 26.600 €

Total Indonesia (2006-2021) : 30.100 €

PAKISTAN

The Labour Education Foundation (LEF) develops a wide range of programs on children's rights, training for trade unionists, advice and assistance in organizing sectors such as home-based workers, and response to humanitarian crises. The Crofter Foundation (CF) provides support to small-scale farmers.

In 2022, Pakistan was the scene of a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented severity in the country, linked to climate change. A particularly severe heat wave was followed by devastating floods, drowning a third of the country. The LEF and the CF have mobilized together, within the framework of the Labour Relief Campaign, to help the most affected populations to cope with this disaster.

Total 2022 : 17.200 €

Total Pakistan (2005-2022) : 108.105 €

PHILIPPINES

Our partner in the Philippines is the Mihands coalition, which brings together a network of some fifty associations with a variety of specialties - they respond together to humanitarian emergencies, combining their skills as closely as possible to the needs. These crisis situations have multiple causes: military conflicts, so-called natural disasters, epidemics, challenges to the rights of mountain populations (Lumad)... Mihands operates in a large part of the island of Mindanao, in the south of the archipelago, but occasionally "projects" itself beyond. It helps local communities to self-organize and adapt their socio-economic activities (including agricultural production) to better withstand climate chaos. In their areas of activity, Mihands members are confronted with a real war situation that is getting worse. The return to power of the Marcos clan (which had instituted the martial law regime in the 1970s) does not herald a democratization of the country! Since Mindanao is one of the most militarized territories in the archipelago, members of the Mihands (and other progressive movements) must assume their multiple responsibilities in a context of permanent insecurity.

Total for the year 2022: 19,500 €

Total Philippines (2007-2021) : 145.089,27 €

* * *

All countries combined

GENERAL TOTAL ESSF FOR 2022 : 55.500 €

General total ESSF (2005-2022) : 437.193,04 €

With warm thanks to all those who contributed to this year of solidarity,

ESSF

Mark Johnson, Pierre Rousset

Excerpts from the minutes of the ESSF general assembly of February 12, 2022

The following points were noted:

- The global climatic and ecological crisis (collapse of biodiversity, soil erosion, deforestation often combined with the expansion of plantations, water crises and droughts, extreme climatic phenomena...) is proving to be increasingly out of control and its impact more and more brutal.

- Geostrategic tensions are rising, particularly in Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific. The situation on the border with Ukraine is very worrying. If war still seems unlikely, it is no longer inconceivable. Europe is outside the scope of our association's own responsibility, but we must develop the coverage, via our website, of Eastern Europe (progress has already been made in this area since 2014).

China/US tensions are crystallizing on the Taiwan issue, but as far as the South Pacific as well. This is an issue we are following closely, but there is a need to improve the information provided on Taiwan, both in terms of historical background and the situation there. We do not align ourselves with any power in inter-imperialist conflicts and we recognize the right of the Taiwanese people to freely decide their future.

- In Burma, the military putsch of February 1, 2021 could have been aborted, given the extraordinary scale of the civic general strike that followed it. This would have required sufficient sanctions against the junta and in support of the resistance. This was not the case. The conflict is now entrenched and violent. Aid to the people of Burma must now become sustainable and no longer ad hoc, in coordination with the maximum number of solidarity components.

- The Covid-19 pandemic is unfortunately still very topical. Whatever its subsequent evolution, it has opened up the era of health crises, the beginnings of which we could already see. Its role in the crisis of neoliberal globalization shows to what extent the question of pandemics cannot be treated in isolation, neither in their causes nor in their consequences. It is necessary to aim at a "total information" in the matter of epidemics, by treating their properly medical and informative aspects, their political and economic interrelations, the impact on the health systems and the criticism of the capitalist order that they call into question.

For the rest of the agenda, we extended and reaffirmed the decisions of the previous GA:

- The pandemic caused by the new coronavirus means that the need for solidarity with our partners is ever more urgent due to its direct effects (health crisis) and indirect effects (social crisis and increased authoritarian drift). Our partners will have to continue their actions under particularly difficult conditions. Our own activity may also be affected.

- We must give the greatest visibility to this question by treating it on all levels: medical knowledge, protection measures, analyses of sanitary policies, general background (link between the sanitary crisis, the socio-ecological crisis, the capitalist globalization), debates and alternatives. To do this,

we must create on our site “health” and “pandemic” sections, as already exists for “women” or “ecology”, whereas at present “health” sections are rare and often only concern the struggles for the defense of health care systems.

- We have made progress on the redesign of the site, as decided last year, but it is a very long process. To be continued.

We reaffirm our commitments

- The functioning of the association is entirely based on voluntary work and the policy of minimum costs so that the funds collected are effectively devoted entirely to solidarity. The only expenses deducted are the cost of transfers and account management (around 5%). Our association has no funds of its own and its bank account only receives solidarity donations.

We take care of the other operating costs ourselves, such as those related to the website (domain name, hosting) or the distribution of the newsletters.

- As a rule, our work is long-term. We do not “export” our own projects. We prefer to support movements that are socially rooted in their countries, able to respond to emergencies based on their involvement in the field and their own perceptions of priorities. We help our partners to ensure the development of their solidarity activities and to encourage the self-organization of the populations for whom our financial support is intended.

- Given our limited resources and the quality of our relationships with local associations and networks, we will continue to devote regular solidarity to the Philippines, Pakistan, Indonesia and Bangladesh. We will also continue to support Burma, where our links with the popular resistance are indirect. Other possible solidarity initiatives will be, at least initially, more punctual.

We wish to work, in France and in Europe, together with other associations for the development of a “Europe of solidarity”.

To send donations

Donations can be given by cheques (in euros only, payable in France), direct bank transfers to our account or via Helloasso and PayPal.

Donations can be one-time or regular (monthly, the best formula for our association), or a combination of both.

Cheques

cheques to ESSF in euros only, payable in France, to be sent to:

ESSF

2, rue Richard-Lenoir

93100 Montreuil

France

Bank Account:

Crédit lyonnais

Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525)

10 boulevard Chanzy
93100 Montreuil
France
ESSF, account number 445757C

International bank account details :

IBAN : FR85 3000 2005 2500 0044 5757 C12
BIC / SWIFT : CRLYFRPP
Account holder : ESSF

Through PayPal

To access PayPal use the email address contact europe-solidaire.org
Or click on the PayPal icon on the home page.

Through HelloAsso

You can also send money through the association HelloAsso: see its button on ESSF English home page: <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?page=sommaire&lang=en>
Or go directly to:
<https://www.helloasso.com/associations/europe-solidaire-sans-frontieres/formulaires/1/widget>

We will keep you regularly informed via our website about the situation and the use of the solidarity fund.

Footnotes

[1] To subscribe to the various newsletters :

<https://facebook.us8.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5c732dd5ee65845cf20fd724a&id=f9557c45ce>

[2] In French :

<https://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article65021>

In English:

<https://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article65034>

[3] ESSF (article 65392), [Iran: Support for the “Woman, Life, Freedom” Uprising - No to Executions !:](#)

<https://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article65392>