

Creation of a permanent Solidarity Fund for Asia

Tuesday 11 December 2012, by [ESSE](#), [ROUSSET Pierre](#), [SABAI Danielle](#) (Date first published: 8 December 2012).

Since 2004 – the year when a devastating tsunami hit the coasts of the Indian Ocean –, Europe solidaire sans frontières (ESSF) launched a number of financial campaigns to assist Asian victims of humanitarian disasters. We will surely continue to initiate (or participate in) such campaigns. However, after 10 years of experience, we deem it important to be contented no longer with a succession of punctual initiatives. We need to strengthen this field of action by creating a permanent Solidarity Fund for Asia.

A financial campaign requires time to be launched, but movements with whom we work are obliged to start to act immediately to bring emergency assistance and contribute to the self-organization of the communities that have been hit by disasters. With the constitution of a permanent financial reserve, the solidarity fund will allow us to send without waiting, a first tranche of assistance, which will continuously be reconstituted with the money collected.

Moreover, the success of a punctual campaign for financial assistance depends to a considerable extent on the « visibility » of the victims – that is, the attention given to them by the media. A fact where we cannot do much about. The creation of the Fund will help to emancipate us (at least a little bit) from the « dictatorship » of the instantaneous and the media's focus.

Aid should benefit in priority the people who need it most. Now rural, working class and urban poor communities are oftentimes doubly victimized : by the humanitarian disaster, and because of a socially unequal and politically clientelistic distribution of official aid. The same inequalities are reproduced during the period of reconstruction. To fight against this state of things, we work with social movements intervening on the field, able to strengthen the self-organizing capacity of the concerned communities.

The effectiveness of a « people to people » policy of aid thus requires a long-lasting collaboration of « movements to movements ». However, militant organizations working on the field face big difficulties. There is an on-going international initiative to assure a better advocacy for human rights defenders, who, because of their engagement, can become victims of repression themselves. Experience shows that this happens in all fields of solidarity actions. The defenders of human rights, defenders of the victims of natural disasters, defenders of victims of military conflicts or of marginalized social sectors are often harassed. These militants can be kidnapped, tortured, imprisoned... Material means are needed to undertake in the concerned countries a democratic campaign to assure their protection (financing of mobilizations, juridical costs, etc.) With this permanent Fund, we hope to be able to contribute more effectively, even if modestly.

Facing social and humanitarian disasters, aid is not limited to emergency assistance nor to post-disaster reconstruction tasks. The link with the concerned communities should be durably maintained. The network of movements able to undertake a militant type of solidarity should be reinforced. There too, we would like to contribute in a better way, in cooperation with our partner organizations, like the Labour Education Foundation (LEF) in Pakistan, or the International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam and in Manila.

Our means being limited and the « historic » links of ESSF being more with Asia, it is towards this part of the world where our initiatives are and will be done. Nonetheless, we will relay on our website, the campaigns conducted in other regions or by other associations, but the permanent Solidarity Fund will be solicited only for Asia, and, in priority, in places where we have tied long-lasting links and collaboration with partner organizations – all this in function of course of the means we dispose of... thanks to you.

Pierre Rousset

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Europe solidaire sans frontières (ESSF)

An evaluation of each specific campaign for financial assistance conducted by ESSF is available on the ESSF website. Two overall evaluations of all solidarity actions also exist :

[A second update of ESSF financial solidarity campaigns: March 2010-October 2012](#) (ESSF article 27235)

[Un bilan des campagnes de solidarité financières d'ESSF : janvier 2005-février 2010](#) (ESSF article 16482) [In French, to be translated into English soon]

To send donations

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cheques to ESSF in euros only 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

We shall keep you informed through our website of the state of the permanent solidarity fund and how it is utilized.

