



SAAM is a pilot action of educational mobility in the field of vocational training
This newsletter gathers the most relevant milestones achieved
during the first months of this amazing journey

What will you find?



Online working

Kick Off meeting
 Peer to peer sessions
 Comms' & Admin. meetings



Who is who?

Work Package Leaders
 Quality advisory Board
 Interview: Alfredo Garmendia



Mom! We are famous

The best dissemination activities
 that took place during the first
 months of the project

WHAT IS SAAM?

If you still don't know

SAAM in 4 numbers:

24 countries: 8 countries from European Union and 16 from Africa.

32 partners: 17 partners from EU and 19 from Africa, who are VET centres, youth organizations and institutions. They all bring their knowledge in their specialty.

3 fields involved: Agriculture, Hospitality and Tourism, engineering and manufacturing

4 million Euro: funded by the AU-EU Skills for Youth employment program

SAAM in 3 steps:

More than 100 EU staff from European VET centers will travel to Africa.

For a **two-week job-shadowing** when they will observe the VET system in Africa and then gather information with the aim of **creating a report** that will support the building of a strategy to improve the different centers

1

African staff will travel to Europe. For a seminar in Brussels about Educative Mobility followed by a few weeks stay in a European VET

center. Thanks to this mobility African staff will be able to design an action plan to **implement an international department** in their VET center. After that, EU mobility experts will travel to each partner country in Africa to support the execution of the plan.

2

More than 300 African VET students will travel to Europe: A mobility project is an experience abroad that is a chance to learn, discover and develop new abilities. They will come back **more empowered**

3

SAAM in 3 goals:

- ✓ To create training modules for VET professional
- ✓ To implement a mobility department in every African VET center involved
- ✓ To bring an international experience to African VET students

MOVING TOGETHER... REMOTELY!



Project launch and first steps: a challenging journey to overcome

April was meant to bring about a thriving event: **SAAM Kick-Off Meeting** was scheduled in Kenya. An unfortunate and unexpected pandemic ruined the moment, but it didn't stop the project!

All face-to-face activities were transformed and adapted for a **new online reality** and, since then, **watching our faces on the screen has become the new normal**.



The VET centre **San Viator** and the mobility organisation **Asociación Mundus** are the managing institutions of SAAM, who led the virtual kick off meeting which gathered all SAAM partners, EU delegates in Africa, and the SAAM Quality Board. SAAM, Africa-EU partnership funded with more than **4M€**, kick started the 7th May through a virtual meeting attended by more than 80 people representing VET centres, non-profit organisation and public institutions, as well as **mobility and education** experts. The SAAM (Supporting Alliance for African Mobility) project was one of only two pilot projects approved in January to promote exchanges in the field of vocational training between Africa and Europe for teachers and students from both continents.

It is time to work and grow together. And international mobility will be the tool that will help us get to know each other.

Alfredo Garmendia, project manager and head of international projects at Centro San Viator, welcomed attendees from 25 different countries: "It is time to work and grow together. And international mobility

will be the tool that will help us get to know each other." SAAM will, in the next three years, to plan and implement the mobility of **300 African students** who will carry out exchange periods in European companies, and more than **200 European and African teachers** who will do job shadowing periods in the opposite continent with the aim of bringing both educational systems closer and facilitating mobility between Africa and Europe in the field of VET.

We need people to be able to create jobs. This is going to be an opportunity for the young people and by default for the schools who train this young people for the future.

SAAM is part of the AU-Skills for Youth Employability programme, through which it aims to encourage the creation of youth employment. Deirdre Lennan, **European Commission's International Cooperation** officer: "We need people to be able to create jobs. This is going to be an opportunity for the young people and by default for the schools who train this young people for the future".



The virtual meeting consisted on introducing the management team and roles, as well as the partner organisations, and taking a tour of what will happen in SAAM in the next 40 months. Beatrice Bellet, project manager and head of strategy and development for Asociación Mundus, emphasised SAAM's uniqueness: **"From the beginning we knew what we wanted to offer in this**

From the beginning we knew what we wanted to offer in this unprecedented call. We were aware that the most important thing was to build a coherent partnership.

unprecedented call. We were aware that the most important thing was to build a coherent partnership." In this initial meeting, management (presented by San Viator), communication (by Asociación Mundus) and evaluation (led by the Greek entity AKMI) plans were also presented. **This alliance aims at promoting the exchange of ideas and good practices between regions**, improving the skills of teachers and students, increasing the standards of management and training quality, and finally improving the curricular project of vocational training centres.

Peer work has started!

The first **peer-to peer meetings** in SAAM have been completed. These are an initial approach for the partners who are going to work together, to get to know each other, their environments, their contexts and, of course, their faces!

SAAM management team has put together the matches of VET professionals who will be hands-on, developing materials and bringing their local educational contexts closer to their counterparts.

From 30th June to 21st July, **15 peer-to-peer online sessions** have been carried out, so the partners of the project can get to know their fellow **VET professionals** who they are going to work with.

The sessions were facilitated by the SAAM management team and they were assessed by Morgane Merret, a linguist professional who is elaborating a report on how to manage a multicultural communication approach within a project with such language complexity. In total, **fifteen meetings have occurred**, unfortunately all

of them through video calls. All the sessions were recorded and minuted, so all the partnership can further access the content.

Thanks to SAAM umbrella partner **Don Bosco Tech Africa**, based in Kenya, the peer work was smoother, since this organisation acts as a **powerful link between the management team and all the participant Don Bosco schools in Africa.**

As the many screenshots taken show, several **happy faces** were as close as they could be through video calls. *What time is*



it there? Is it true that in your country you have six months of darkness? How do you handle 45 degrees in the Summer?!

Intercultural awareness was a terrific result of the meetings when **different countries of the two continents involved were brought together.**

The importance of peer work

SAAM main objective is to build a **strong international community** to perform the activities and obtain optimum results. In order to achieve this goal, small working groups are created around the African hosting partners. This first encounter

represents the starting of a common path in which European and African partners are going to hold hands towards a full assessment of VET systems, institutions and schools on each other's local context.

The teams created through these meetings are just a starting point to foresee the next phase of SAAM, in which (if COVID-19 subsides) European teachers and staff will perform a job shadowing stay at the African VET centers. The African hosts will design the visits to make the experience as much profitable as possible in order to develop common paths and materials specifically for SAAM, but also to follow suit for future VET schemes in cooperation.





Get to know the peers!

The teams created around the African hosting partners are as follows:

- **NIGERIA:** John Bosco Institute of Technology – CPIFP Profesor Jose Luis Graiño and CPIFP Corona de Aragón (Spain), Insignare (Portugal)
- **MALAWI:** Don Bosco Youth Technical Institute – Centro San Viator (Spain), Scuola Centrale Formazione (Italy)
- **SENEGAL:** Centre de Formation Professionnelle de Don Bosco Medina Fall – SEPR (France), CNOS-FAP (Italy), CPIFP Corona de Aragón (Spain)
- **CAMEROON PROCEFFA:** PROCEFFA – IES Escola Pia and Ikaslan (Spain), Insignare (Portugal)
- **CAMEROON EBOLOWA:** Institute Technique Don Bosco Ebolowa – CPIFP Profesor Jose Luis Graiño (Spain), Insignare (Portugal), SEPR (France) – With the support of Don Bosco Tech Africa (Kenya)
- **TUNISIA:** Association WeYouth (Tunisia) – SCF (Italy), KPEDU (Finland), AKMI (Greece)
- **BURKINA FASO:** Centre Privé de la Formation Professionnelle Don Bosco Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) – CPIFP Profesor Jose Luis Graiño (Spain), SEPR (France), CNOS-FAP (Italy) – With the support of Don Bosco Tech Africa (Kenya)
- **CHAD:** École Professionnelle Don Bosco N'Djamena (Chad) – IKASLAN and Escola Pia (Spain), KPEDU (Finland) – With the support of Don Bosco Tech Africa (Kenya)
- **IVORY COAST:** Centre de Formation Professionnelle Artisanal Rural – SCF and CNOS-FAP (Italy), AKMI (Greece)
- **MALI:** Centre Pere Michel de Bamako – Escola Pia (Spain), ANESPO (Portugal), KPEDU (Finland) – With the support of Don Bosco Tech Africa (Kenya)
- **CABO VERDE:** Escola de Hotelaria e Turismo de Cabo Verde – ANESPO and Insignare (Portugal), Escola Pia (Spain).
- **ANGOLA:** Dom Bosco Training Centre Mabubas – ANESPO and Insignare (Portugal), SCF (Italy)
- **BENIN:** École Professionnelle Salesienne Saint Jean Bosco – Tech Don Bosco and CPIFP Corona de Aragon (Spain), ANESPO (Portugal).
- **LIBERIA:** Don Bosco Boys' Town Technical Institute Africa (Kenya) – CPIFP Corona de Aragón and Tech Don Bosco (Spain), AKMI (Greece)
- **KENYA:** Don Bosco Boys' Town Technical Institute (Kenya) – Tech Don Bosco and IKASLAN (Spain), AKMI (Greece)
- **SUDAN:** St. Joseph Vocational Training Centre – SCF (Italy), IKASLAN and Tech Don Bosco (Spain)



A challenging strategy plus a group of motivated people equals to a thriving Communications Meeting

The 4th and 5th June the first communication meeting in SAAM took place. Thanks to video calling tools, 21 people representing SAAM partnership met to explore together the communication and dissemination plans of the project, along with the SAAM's Comms team.

SAAM is meant to have an impact on people from 25 countries. This feature implies the fact that **SAAM is going to reach several target groups with various backgrounds along several local contexts, besides its ambitious international sphere.** Moreover, such a complex initiative is aimed at having the smoother although well-defined internal communication among the counterparts and stakeholders involved. In these days of uncertainty, SAAM faces the added challenge of handling the remoteness of their partnership in such a critical moment of History as the outbreak of COVID-19 is.

In a project of this size, coordination is crucial, and frequent communication meetings are an important tool to make sure that both the communication management team and the partners are always on the same page, that every participant understands their role and that the dissemination goals are being met by every partner and by the project as a whole.

In this regards, the **first two communication meetings** (one in French and one in English) were particularly important, as they brought together for the first time all the communication assignees on SAAM to dig deeper into the dissemination plan and the communication tools provided by the project.

One of the main challenges for SAAM's communication strategy is to have a fluent internal communication and a common understanding despite the remoteness of the partnership and the travel restrictions

Communication in SAAM is absolutely challenging, since it has to take into account the specificity of the communication approach in each country where it is being implemented, but at the same time it has to follow common guidelines agreed at the beginning of the project. In this regard, **common paths have been set in terms of dissemination, but at the same time each partner has room for adapting them to local contexts and specific target groups.**

For reaching SAAM's objectives, the communication meetings focused on exploring the **dissemination plan, which is the framework for the next three years to obtain the expected impact for the project.** Besides, the first dissemination actions were explained, so the partners would provide the needed material to feed SAAM's sites (descriptions for the website, videos and photo material), and for every partner to set their own dissemination goals and media databases, and in order to explain how the reporting will be done throughout the lifespan of the project.



The administrations meetings: an unavoidable step for a successful project

SAAM connects 32 partners based in 25 different countries from Europe and Africa. Such a complex and spread partnership has to necessarily aim for a neat organization and coordination. As a project of this scope requires, SAAM relies on a hard work in administration and accounting. Every step taken in terms of the administration plan in SAAM aims at complying with SAAM's funding body AU-EU Partnership.

This is why last June administration meetings were carried out in order to clarify to the different participants of the project the administrative tasks in detail. It is important to be sure that every partner understands correctly the assigned tasks and the way the expenses within SAAM have to be justified, so as to reach the highest level of accountability and transparency.

Administration meetings were a powerful platform for answering all the financial concerns

These meetings were also the perfect opportunity to answer to the different matters that the partnership had, regarding the particularities of each countries regulations and the role of every partner involved. Thus Estela Arkarazo, who is in charge of the administrative and financial aspects of the project, spent privileged time with the representatives of SAAM' partnership in a closer committee, to address these specific issues.

In total, there were **five meetings** conducted between the 25th of May and the 10th of June: one for the European partners, a second for the anglophone Africans partners, a third one for the francophone Africans partners, a specific meeting for the Work Package Leaders and a last meeting with DBTA, as it is a huge umbrella organization for the participating Don Bosco African schools.

Several questions came up during the meetings, as the different members of SAAM don't have to deal with the same issues. For example, there were some concerns regarding currency exchange and taxes, as well as for some of the countries involved was important to have translated documents to be able to use them at a local level.

These meetings are **an important step to make sure that the project complies with the very well detailed administration plan** submitted to the funding bodies. A good organization is key, to be sure that every partner will carefully take over their administrative duties.

This is one of the meetings that have been conceive to clarify the specific guidelines of the project regarding Communication, Administration and Quality.

STARRING...



Work package leaders

These 9 members have an **appointed task** for the development, coordination and implementation of the project.



Click to learn more about their role and specific tasks in SAAM!

SAAM connects 32 partners working together for a powerful alliance in VET education between Africa and Europe. Having a strong partnership, composed of experts in different fields, is a crucial feature for this ambitious pilot project to be successful. VET centers, NGOs, youth organizations and institutions work together and bring their experience in their field. Every single one of them is unique, but all of them are working for the same goal: improving the VET systems in 24 countries. It is thanks to the diversity and the complementary of all the participants that SAAM can keep moving forward for high-quality results and the correct implementation of the activities over the time.

Let's us present the Work Package leaders of the SAAM team:

CENTRO SAN VIATOR SOPUERTA:

Created in 1952, is a Spanish school with a huge offer in professional training. Centro San Viator Sopena works on the personal development of the students with the focus on entrepreneurship, linguistics, orientation and international mobility.

They are the applicant of SAAM, which means that they are responsible for management, administration and finances of the project. San Viator has developed a management plan that sets the pathway to be follow for the whole duration of the project. They are constantly in touch with the several project managers assigned by each partner for a better coordination.

ASOCIACION MUNDUS:

A non-profit organization based in Spain whose main activity is designing and coordinating different international mobility projects as internships, volunteering or long-term projects under the umbrella of different European programmes. Mundus believes that international experience is a way of empowering people and building a better society.

The expertise of Mundus when it comes to international mobility is undeniable: it is one of the most prolific organisations in the field all around Europe. Asociación Mundus is the coordinator of the project, meaning that it is in charge of the outline of the project design, communications, logistics, time management, meetings and technical day-to-day tasks.

CNOS-FAPS:

An Italian organization working in the field of VET whose aim is that every student can access a quality training based on the business needs through the development of specific and transversal professional skills.

In SAAM, CNOS-FAPS is the main responsible to develop the African strategy from Europe. Based on the EVBB report and plus their experience, they will be working on a training module with teachers and staff in order to create different content to advice the African VET center managing international mobility with effective learning outcomes. Each member of the staff in SAAM is asked, once back from Africa, to deliver an action plan with the goal of eventually establishing a mobility department.

DON BOSCO TECH AFRICA:

An organization that coordinates 102 VET centers across 34 African countries. Thanks to its experience on vocational education and training, it has a deep knowledge of the different local contexts and a holistic strategy.

DBTA's biggest contribution for SAAM at the beginning was finding VET centres in Africa which were fit and interested in SAAM. Eventually, they ended up gathering more than 80% of the VET centers involved in the project, so it has been a crucial point of contact and a cohesive partner. They are playing an important role on coordinating the different African partners and organizing the logistics and plan for the student mobilities in Europe. They will also work with CNOS-FAPS on creating an ambitious international plan in the aim of establishing a mobility department in every African VET center of the project.

EVBB:

The European Association Institutes for Vocational Training, which is considered as an umbrella association, as it works with 65 educational institution for a better quality in VET all over Europe. EVBB is an expert in VET education in an European context.

As a member of SAAM it has a special mission to carry out an analysis of the African VET systems to be exploited after the first mobility flow of the project: the job-shadowings. To achieve that, the European staff going to African VET centres will observe and take notes once they are on site for the job-shadowing. They will need to provide the teaching methods, the contents given, the technologies used, but even insights about the local labor market. These information will serve to fill out a template which will help EVBB to work on a report about the situation in African VET centers. Thanks to this report it will be possible to build a strategy to give key solutions to fill in the gaps between European and African VET system.

EfVET:

The European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, works to enhance technical and vocational education and training in Europe with an international point of view.

One of the main tasks EfVET has in SAAM is to prepare the first step of the African staff mobility in Europe: a training seminar in Brussel. They will conceive a one week workshop whose subject will be expanding his own capacity in order to build international mobility departments and networks. Thanks to it, the participants will gain the status of a certified "mobility coordinator".

IEKAKMI:

In Greece is coordinating more than 14,000 students in all the country in different professional schools and branches. Quality is the main word in AKMI school: they are innovating with new tools to ensure the best to their students.

Thanks to this experience they are able to work for the implementation of the EQAVET – The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET – in SAAM. Following this European indicator is a way to ensure the quality of the project.

YESFORUM

A European network composed of 40 NGOs willing to improve the future of young people thanks to education and transnational cooperation.

YESForum, as a SAAM member, will work during the third and last step of the project to create an online training module which will contain all the information for the African students to get themselves prepared for an international learning experience in Europe.

SCF, SCUOLA CENTRALE FORMAZIONE:

An Association representing training institutions and organizations at a nation level, focused on sharing experiences thanks to a special network, with the aim of facilitating the replication of training experiences.

SCF puts sharing in the center of its work, the reason why they are in charge of the establishment of SAAM Network, which will foster the international cooperation in and out of SAAM's partnership. It will have two aims: first, to be a database keeping and contact point for all the organizations to be in touch; and second, to give career guidance and counselling services in the future.



QAB: shielding best quality in SAAM

The **Quality Advisory Board (QAB)** is a complementary assessment and advisory system enabled in SAAM with the objective of taking it to the highest levels of quality. This board is formed by **six volunteers with a profound experience** in the fields of TVET, education policies, entrepreneurship and job insertion for youngsters.

Get to know SAAM's Council of Wisdom!

The **quality system** of SAAM is bullet-proof! From its inception, designing a perfect quality control system for SAAM was established as one of the cornerstones of the project. One of the SAAM's workpackages, lead by AKMI and Asociación Mundus, provides a Quality Control Plan as a framework in which a Quality Assurance Structure is provided, including a Quality Control Board (QCB) as the main assessment body, but also the Quality Advisory Board (QAB). This additional and voluntary control mechanism provides an extra level of scrutiny and control of SAAM development, based on an impeccable level of quality and accuracy.

All the members of the **Quality Advisory Board (QAB)** are recognized specialists at a National, European and/or African level in the field of education and TVET. The QAB is therefore a valuable source of expertise and country specific insights, and their input and views will ensure the deliverables are targeted, demand-led and industry related. We have asked the members of this sort of 'Council of Wisdom' to tell us more about their experience and how they approach SAAM from their specific backgrounds and expertise. Let's get to know them in depth!

Doctor Madler Serban (Romania)

SAAM is an ambitious, complex, and pioneering endeavor that can offer so needed opportunities for transformation and trans-continental mobility in VET!

Doctor Serban is a visiting professor at the Faculty for Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Bucharest. She was for 8 years (the maximum legally allowable mandate) the director of the European agency for human capital

development under the European Union external relations, the ETF. She has a far-reaching international experience from her work as a senior expert for bilateral and international organizations, including UNESCO, USAID, the European Commission, Erasmus+ included, OECD and the World Bank. She has spent most of her career working in the field of vocational education and training, as genuine part of integrated and holistic policies in action for human capital development.



During a significant length of her time at UNESCO and at the ETF (among other projects), she had the chance to get in contact with “the splendid diversity of the continent, whether it’s about its people potential, cultural traditions or growth opportunities”. She has thoroughly worked on VET transformation, therefore Dr. Serban approaches SAAM as a

sharing and learning space for professionals who aim to “moving the needle in the intended direction”. In her words, achieving a solid cooperation between continents in terms of Education implies “urgent, equitable and of good quality enhancement for the purposes of Africa’s prosperity and its youth wellbeing, at home and elsewhere”.

Advice: “Do not hunt for short term trophies! Such project takes time!”

Beatrice Khamati Njenga (Kenya)

“Exchanges between Africa and Europe can serve to facilitate mutual learning, enhance knowledge of TVET, enhance quality and build global friendships for peaceful coexistence”

She is a reductionist and environmental scientist. One of her main goals is ensuring that all people have access to quality transformative education and training, that imbues a wide range of literacies, and life skills and values of integrity and responsible citizenship, employability and entrepreneurial skills, along with critical mindset. “I endeavour to engage with and accordingly influence organisations and institutions active in these

fields”, explains Ms. Khamati. She describes herself as “African with a heart for empowering the next generation of leaders of integrity, to build an Africa that is integrated, peaceful and prosperous, believing that our youthful population is our greatest asset”.

Her perception of SAAM is that it is a project that aims high, therefore it is crucial for it to “remain aligned to AU vision and be responsive to the aspirations and perspective of participants, to ensure quality and promote sustainability”. In her opinion, TVET is one of those areas through which we can have the greatest impact, thereby harnessing the youth demographic dividend and turning a potential challenge into a power for transformation.

Advice: “Maintain mutual respect and mutual accountability, and clarity of roles and expectations”

Doctor Edwind Tarno (Kenya)

“As a TVET expert for AU it is important that I take part of this project. I want to share the experience that I have in TVET to facilitate this project”

He is a doctor in organisation development and TVET principal in Kenya and he has been a technical trainer for the last 32 years. Mr.

Tarno was born and raised in Kenya, and he himself was educated in TVET in Africa. He has worked for CAPA to foster TVET growth and has been a consultant for the African Union in the field of TVET.

For Dr. Tarno, SAAM it’s a “brilliant idea that implies enormous benefits for those participating, as well as for the countries where



the exchange will take place”.

The professor's interest in taking part in SAAM lies in his idea that prosperity will come through relevant educational systems that are grounded on solving societal needs. In this regard, Dr. Tarno firmly believes that the main

goal for a solid cooperation between Africa and Europe is to study and collect data on African TVET, and to do capacity building of African VET staff through international exchange, so as to transfer knowledge and skills in TVET with the European system.

Advice: “Maintain the tempos even amid challenges”

Doctor Langat Kipkirui (Kenya)

“SAAM it's a noble project that guarantees shared prosperity between Europe and Africa”

Trained as a technical trainer qualifying with Bachelor of Education and Master Philosophy in TVET and PhD in Engineering Systems and Management. For last 23 years he has worked in TVET sector, also as a trainer both at TVET and at the University. Moreover, Dr. Kipkirui is involved in policy, standards and quality assurance development and implementation.

He is currently Director General of TVET Authority, overseeing coordination and regulation of the sector in Kenya.

In the opinion of Dr. Kipkirui, with relevant training, Africa has a potential to provide a livelihood to over 200 million youths bearing in mind it has 30% of the remaining natural resources in the world. Therefore, “projects like SAAM helps advancing on the way to ensure more youths in the continent are empowered to take charge of their destiny and contribute fully in the socioeconomic development of the continent”.

Advice: “Get to understand priority socioeconomic sectors and key stakeholders/players and support programmes that prepare youths to be engage in the sectors”

Camila de Epalza Azqueta (Belgium)

“SAAM is a win-win collaboration between Africa and Europe; a strategic alliance”

Ms. de Epalza is a Spanish Sociologist and Political Scientist, specialised in Political Sociology, and European and international affairs. After 6 years working for the United Nations (UNICEF Costa Rica and UNDP Guinea-Bissau), she is the Senior Policy Officer at the Basque Government Delegation to the European Union.

As a Policy Officer in External Action, she represents a focal point of European policies

in the field of education, creative and cultural industries, development cooperation, SDGs and international agendas. She also advises on those policies to socio-economic stakeholders and public authorities.

Ms. de Epalza, who has a deep experience working in African countries, believes that SAAM is a “key and strategic project with a sustainable and long term vision”. In her opinion, one of SAAM's strengths is its capacity to match the potential of skills and education, partnership, leadership and legacy between generations, in line with the SDG Goals.



Esther Estany (Spain)

"We have to join our efforts. Europe needs the African youth skills"

Esther Estany is the current Head of the International Programs in the Public Employment Service of Catalonia. She has always been involved in international mobility projects. She entered the Catalan Public Administration many years ago and back in 1985 she started the Eurodissey programme, a EU programme for mobility between European regions. She has managed projects within the former Leonardo da Vinci, under Erasmus+ and other regional programmes. She is part of the FREREF and EARLALL organizations, both addressing Lifelong Learning.

Ms. Estany is eager to be part of a project like SAAM. In her opinion, it might help

overcoming a concern of our time: "Africa is a continent of young people. It is extremely difficult for these young people to find their professional way. Europe is called the "old continent" and this is true even for the age of its people. We have to join our efforts [...]. Projects like SAAM will help in achieving this goal. SAAM will help not only to know each other, but to adapt the skills of young Africans to the European labour market".

For Esther, the main goal to achieve a solid cooperation between Africa and Europe is standardising education and qualification systems, so a certificate, degree, VET course achieved, etc. has the same value no matter where it has been obtained. "There is a long way to go and we are late. African youngsters have to acquire international experience through projects like this. They need to see other realities in order to find their future both abroad or within their own borders".

Advice: "Please, listen. Listen what African people have to say, what are their needs and expectations. We don't have to feel like teachers, we have to collaborate"

The Quality Advisory Board (QAB) is a complementary assessment and advice system enabled in SAAM with the objective of taking it to the highest levels of quality possible. This board is formed by six volunteers with a profound experience in the fields of TVET, Education policies, entrepreneurship and job insertion for youngsters. They will provide guidance based in their expertise to get the best results out of it and to ensure both an effective implementation and a permanent impact over the upcoming years.

Alfredo Garmendia: "SAAM will never stop!"

FEATURED INTERVIEW - NEWSLETTER 1

Alfredo Garmendia is the leader of the International Office at Centro San Viator Sopuerta, the applicant and leader partner of SAAM. We have interviewed him for more details about the project and how the challenge of moving forward in the midst of a global pandemic has been tackled from within. **You can't miss it!**



SAAM is a two-headed project in terms of its leadership. Centro San Viator Sopuerta and Asociación Mundus have set up a strategic alliance in which two really relevant entities in the field of international mobility for learning purposes in Europe have joined forces for this pilot project.

As a **referential vocational training center** in Spain in the field of international mobility of VET students, San Viator has the crucial role of leading this project as applicant, in control of the overall evolution of SAAM from a strategic and financial point of view..

Alfredo Garmendia leads the international department of San Viator Sopuerta, a vocational training center in the north of Spain, in the Basque Country, very close to Bilbao. Alfredo is an old acquaintance in the European spaces for international mobility. In fact, he tells us, from these meetings arise the first links in establishing European partnership of SAAM. Hand in hand with Béatrice Bellet, strategic chief officer of Asociación Mundus, they are leading this exciting and challenging pilot project called SAAM. Do you want to know more? Check out this Question and Answer interview with SAAM's main carer! in their expertise to get the best results out of it and to ensure both an effective implementation and a permanent impact over the upcoming years.

This project is really big and ambitious and will last at least 3 years. Is it the first time that you are managing a project of this scope?

This is a pilot, so it has never happened before. Hence, this is a first experience for all of us. It is true that we looked for partners who already had experience in Africa: we have really experienced partners like the Finland or Portugal ones that have been working in Africa

for many years. It is the same for the partners in Africa who have been working with Europe and other parts of the world. But SAAM is a pilot and it is the first experience for all of us in something similar. This is the very first time that my organization is involved in such a big project for sure. For us, it is a new challenge and kind of an adventure because we are discovering something new.



But San Viator has a great long experience in terms of international projects. Since 2004, we are doing regular international mobility but we also have some really exceptional projects like mobility for people with intellectual disabilities since 2006. We had to face barriers that other schools don't have, as we have been moving people with special needs, but we go through it in the aim of giving the advantage to a lot of users and students, with opportunities to go abroad. We became an example of good practices in mobility of people with special needs, and this experience is a plus for managing SAAM as it is something new and challenging in mobility projects, too.

In San Viator, we know thanks to experiences and background how to deal with difficulties. In SAAM, that approach is always present from the very beginning, as it is a pilot with African countries; for us are another culture and a different way of working. We can adapt and help others to do the same.

How has COVID-19 impacted your job?

Unfortunately, COVID is having a big impact in SAAM, which is a mobility pilot project. Since mobility is now impossible, we have had to adapt to new situations and scenarios; and we have indeed adapted to a new arena: we have prepared everything to be ready for mobility whenever it is possible. We had to cancel everything that was planned, like the Kick-off Meeting in Nairobi in April, so we did it online, with almost one hundred people, coping with all what was meant to be implemented in Nairobi... and what came afterwards! For example, we transformed part of the peer work into a 23 online meetings. We are analyzing different possibilities for the next weeks and months, and we will see what we can and cannot realize. It is unfortunate that

we should have already started with mobilities, but sooner or later we will do it! If mobilities are not possible through the last part of this year, we will get adapted and postpone them to January, or whenever it is possible. But SAAM will never stop. If mobilities cannot take place in the next six months we will go on with the work that is possible to do now, we will go further with other parts of the project.

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situations and scenarios***

Can you explain a day in your life as a member of SAAM?

Now it is a little bit calmer than before, because until mid-July every morning I opened my WhatsApp and there were, depending of the day, twenty or thirty messages related to different topics of SAAM. It could be related to the peer to peers that we had before summer, or validation, or the steering committee... There are a lot of different things going on, even though we are the only ones who know from behind. Then I have to go to my office for meetings: we always have a lot of meetings with partners or with our colleagues. This afternoon, for example, we have a meeting with the European Commission to check in on SAAM. So far, SAAM has been like a wave: you are in the sea and there is this wave that is coming once and again, once and again, and every time you think it is getting calmer, then here it is another wave! Cause we organized everything and then COVID appeared and we had to change a lot of things. So it seems that every day looks the same, because sometimes you think you are in the next step and suddenly something takes you back in the last step.

What is your favorite aspect of being part of SAAM?

I love networking, I love the challenges and I love meeting new people, so for me SAAM has everything I like but not only in the professional sphere. I like that we are getting to know the reality of other countries in Africa. I mean, I have been to Tunisia and that's it, it is my only experience in the African continent. So getting to know realities in different countries that are really different among them but also different with us... It is so interesting!

For example, at the peer to peers, listening to the exchange of experiences and contexts was amazing. Sometimes I get surprised because in this regard SAAM is flowing so much better than I had expected. More than that, SAAM is not only about teaching... The household has to integrate people who have grown in a war, in a conflict...

I love networking, I love challenges and I love meeting new people, so for me SAAM has everything I like

Do you have an advice for a well-managed project?

Be water, my friend! You have to be flexible and empathetic, because sometimes the situation makes you mad, but the truth is that reality is in the middle of what I live and what you live, and that's why you have to be patient and put yourself in other people's shoes. Sometimes things appear to be crazy, but you also have to work in the shoes of the person in front of you to understand what they live and their point of view. Also trust is really important. In SAAM, a keystone is that the partnership necessarily



Centro San Viator - International Department team

asks for confidence, which is something difficult to build but easy to break. That is why the work of communication, not only external but also internal is very important, because we need all the partners to be aware of the advances in SAAM! Internal communication is key to let everybody know where we are now at this point of the project. And this is not always easy, even more with the coronavirus and the distance between the different partners.

In SAAM, we are 36 so it is very complex, because moreover every partner has his own reality, problems, challenges to deal with. That is why communication is a crucial aspect: in every partnership it is a way to go through and get to the final aim.

Can you describe SAAM in three words?

As I said in my speech for the Kickoff Meeting, for me SAAM **sets bidirectional bridges**.

This interview was made on 14th September 2020

MOM! WE ARE FAMOUS!



Even though the project has just started, and due to COVID-19 mobilities were forced to be postponed, **SAAM already resonates** all around the Globe, both inside and outside the partnership.

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