

Travel diary ✈️

SENEGAL



Supporting Alliance for African Mobility

FROM: Spain, Asociación Mundus
TO: Senegal, Don Bosco Medina Fall and ESMP

03/07/2021 - 11/07/2021

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Travel diary

Senegal

Let's discover our two mobility experts

*As project technicians, **Manon Lapasset** and **Sergio Lagarde** coordinate the SAAM day-to-day tasks, the communication with the partners and the coordination and interaction among the Work Packages leaders. Let's get to know them better!*

MANON LAPASSET

SAAM project technician



After 18 months working as project technician in SAAM, Manon knows very well the partners.

She is also hosting the online meetings of "The Voyage" and she is especially involved in the French partnership and communication in SAAM.

Manon is French and has lived in several foreign countries (Australia, Hungary, Spain). A social worker by training, she has been involved in youth mobility projects since 2016, working in different NGOs and Youth organisations. Then, she decided to work in this field by training and specializing in this sector in Spain.

She joined Mundus in January 2020 with SAAM and she discovered the world of VET at the same time.

SERGIO LAGARDE

SAAM project technician

As project technician, Sergio coordinates the SAAM day-to-day tasks, the communication with the partners and the coordination and interaction among the Work Packages leaders. He knows every single partner well and he is probably the person after Bea who knows SAAM better. Since COVID-19, he is hosting the online meetings and leading "The Voyage". Moreover, he co-leads the Quality Assurance Work package together with AKMI (SAAM partner from Greece).

Despite his age, Sergio has a wide experience abroad planning and executing International Cooperation projects. He went to Senegal and co-founded an NGO that works with youth in both Spain and Senegal. Then, he worked with another NGO in Senegal. After that, he has been leading life-changing experiences for youth in international projects.



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Travel diary ➤

📍 Arriving in Senegal

Saturday, July 3rd

After a very long trip with a layover in Lisbon, we arrived in **Dakar, Senegal**. The airport is brand new and it works very well and it is very well organized.



The old airport was in the middle of the city, in the Yoff neighbourhood, but three years ago they opened a new one **1h by car from Dakar**, on the road between Dakar and Thiès. The chauffeur was kindly waiting for us and **everything went smoothly until we arrived at the hotel**.

Since we arrived late at night, we slept in and we woke up quite late on Sunday. The hotel is so nice and fancy and **we slept really comfortably**.

zzz

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Travel diary ➤

📍 Dakar, Senegal

Sunday, July 4th

On Sunday, we met **Camila** right when we woke up to visit the city. Camila was working as a project manager in **CNOSFAP** coordinating SAAM and she moved to Dakar to coordinate other projects from the **Salesian congregation**. We shared a really nice day with her, visiting the African Renaissance Monument, having a super tasty fish at the beach and enjoying some relaxing time with music. **Camila arrived 1 month ago so she shared with us her Senegalese experience.**



HOW WAS OUR AGENDA PLANNED FOR THE FIRST DAYS?

Since SAAM has two partners in Senegal and moreover Dakar is a very well-known African capital with a lot of representatives from European Union, UN and embassies, the mobility experts worked separately for two days:

1

Manon started working on **Thiès**.

2

Sergio visited the partner ESMP in **Dakar** to have a working session with them and disseminated the project by meeting embassies and the European Union Delegation in Senegal.

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Travel diary

 **Thiès, Senegal**

Sunday, July 4th

On our way to Thiès...

By Manon



At 5:30 pm, the chauffeur picked me up to take me to Thiès:

On my way to **Thiès**, I was very surprised about the changes of the landscape. Dakar city is crowded and it's surrounded by desert. But step by step on the way you can enjoy the **baobabs trees** and arriving in Thiès, I was pleased to see so many trees along the road like in my home country. My first impression about Thiès was very nice, **a big city without buildings, with a lot of small stands at the streets**. I felt like crossing a huge village.



When I arrived in Medina Fall center, **Father Antonio and Father Jean** came to greet me. I was quite lucky because I arrived just at the same time of a local Christian **celebration** (Caritas) with the community.

They introduced me to all the people there present. Some kids were playing football in the courtyard. Then, **they showed me my room and the common space of the community**.

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📍 Thiès, Senegal

My room is very humble and at the same time it has everything I need (private bathroom, big bed, desk...). The very good points are the mosquito nets and a brand new air conditioning! What a great surprise! Also they were very kind to leave a lot of bottles of water. **I already feel like home!**

After setting up my room, we went to a **local restaurant with father Jean Lemondo (Director of the community part), Father Antonio (Director) and Germain (Head of Studies)**. We started to talk about the agenda of the next day and we had a very nice dinner (I chose fish again, a grilled dorade, I recommend it!).



CULTURAL FACT 💡

I was very impressed by seeing so many **sheeps** at the street. The driver said that on the 21st of July, Muslims will celebrate **TABASKI** which is the equivalent of 'Aïd el-Kebir in Senegal. Each married man has to buy and kill a sheep and then the family will eat it together.

Father Antonio told me that Christians can also be invited to this celebration. **Muslims are the majority in Senegal and the different religions are well respected.**

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Travel diary ➤

📍 **Dakar, Senegal**

Monday, July 5th

Working in Dakar

By Sergio

I have been working in Dakar today for **institutional purposes** and to work with **ESMP**, the SAAM partner located in Dakar.

In the morning, I had a meeting in the **Spanish Embassy** and in the **Spanish Technical Cooperation Office**. The welcoming in both places was excellent and we had very interesting conversations about SAAM, not just about the great impact it could have on Africa but also the important challenges and good ideas about how to deal with them.

Both institutions want to follow SAAM closely and they offered their hand to help us in all the procedures SAAM will follow to do the mobilities.



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📍 Dakar, Senegal

At midday, I met the **ESMP** team to have a **working session together**, talk about SAAM activities and their role and responsibilities on the project. **ESMP is a High School focused on Project Management** and their role in SAAM is specific and different from the others since they are not a VET centre.



We have had a **very nice working session** together and we have agreed SAAM is an awesome opportunity for both of us to gain visibility, have a great impact in Senegal and establish a strong relationship for future projects.

As all good relationships, we finished having a **delicious lunch in a restaurant** nearby where we had informal talks and very interesting conversations about Senegal, Europe and cooperation projects.



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Travel diary ➤

📍 **Thiès, Senegal**

Monday, July 5th

By Manon

Before starting the day, the Salesians said as every day some words to all the students in the schoolyard. As a guest, I was invited to introduce myself and the object of my visit. It was very moving for me to be in front of the whole school for the first time. (Later, I noticed that all of them reminded my name and came to me, wishing to interact with me in French and in Wolof).



The planning of the morning was quite intense because we had to meet the regional academic inspection of Thiès. We met first **Mr. Diasse**, the inspector.



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📍 Thiès, Senegal

In the afternoon, I met the the **Association of students' parents to present SAAM**.

6 parents came to the meeting and I could explain to them the project and especially ask their opinion about a mobility of their children to understand their expectations and also their concerns. **It was very interesting to get their feedback and see their enthusiasm about mobilities and also their worries about the fact that they could choose to stay illegally in Europe** and would not wish to come back home. We discussed how we could avoid this situation and this should be thought from the beginning when we prepare the students, choose them, and anticipate their role upon their return. With the center, a strong support of insertion have to be planned before their mobility to help them with their insertion and the employability capacity. The parents praised the project and thanked the school for all that it has allowed them.

“

At school, the children receive professional education, but also personal and educational training. I notice the difference at home in his behaviour.

The future for Africa and for Senegal is with the VET education. We need employability so that young people can lead the country in the future.

”

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Travel diary ➤

📍 **Dakar, Senegal**

Tuesday, July 6th

By Sergio

In the early morning I went to visit **Ms. Clarisse Liautaud**, European delegate deputy director of the cooperation section of **European Union in Senegal**. I presented SAAM in detail and we talked about all the challenges and problems SAAM may find preparing the mobilities, specially from Africa to Europe. **She offered her help and the support of her delegation** and she gave us access to new possible collaborators and institutions to support SAAM activities in Senegal.



Around 19h, I finally arrived in **Thiès** where Manon, Father Jean and Father Antonio were waiting for me with the TV on... **Spain was playing!**



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Travel diary ➤

📍 Thiès, Senegal

Tuesday, July 6th

By Manon

Every morning I was having my **breakfast with Antonio, Jean and Germain, who are the 3 Salesians of the centers** (Carlos was on holidays at this time).

In the morning, 3 visits to factories where some students are doing internships and some of them found a job were planned.

SOOW DJABOT

Local cereals factory. François told me that this factory is one which will save the country. There, we met the responsible of the production. We made a tour of the factory and he presented us with the 2 news members (one student of DB doing his internship for the BT (Brevet de Technicien) and another one who just finished his studies in DB and has just been hired on a fixed-term contract.



KIRENE

Water and drinks factory. It's a local factory leaded by a Senegalese entrepreneur. We met **Mr. Diatta**, responsible for the production. We visited the factory and we met one old student of **Don Bosco** who got the job there thanks to his CAP. Also, other previous students of Don Bosco are actually working in the factory.

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📍 Thiès, Senegal

Mr. Diatta explained to us that he **recognizes the professionalism of the center and has a special attention to the resumes that are sent with the training of their center.** The Don Bosco students also go to Kirene for technical visits and internships.



Visit to the Bishop

In the afternoon, we met Monseigneur l'Abbé Pierre Aye Ndione, Diocese of Education of Thiès. We presented SAAM and he thanked us for this big project:

"The meeting between Europe and Africa should lead to a win-win partnership"

He explained to me that the VET center Don Bosco offers a lots of opportunities for the youth. In the past, it was not a prepared location and today the trend is reversing.

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📍 Thiès, Senegal

Wednesday, July 7th

We woke up and had a quick breakfast to go straight to **Diamniadio**, a brand new city in Senegal located in between Dakar and Thiès where the **Ministries** and the most important national **institutions** are all located.

We had a very interesting and fruitful meeting with **Ms. Maimouna Diakhaté** and **Mr. Ousama Seck**, representatives from the **Ministry of VET and Employability**. We presented SAAM and the impact it will have in Senegal. They were really astonished by the project and they look forward to it. They kindly offered their help and support to guide and help us during all the challenges we will find moving people to and from Senegal.



Once we arrived to the Don Bosco center, **all the students were gathered together in the conference room**. There, we did some activities to break the ice and to get to know them. Then, **we presented SAAM in detail, focusing on the 3rd phase: Students mobility**. After that, **we opened the mic to listen to them**. They all have questions, doubts, expectations...and it is essential to listen to all of them to try to provide the best experience ever.

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Travel diary ➤

📍 Thiès, Senegal



After the session with students, we ate quite fast to go straight to a **session with teachers and trainers**. We talked about SAAM in detail, going through **each single objective, phase and activity to have everything understood from both parties** (coordination team and partner). All the teachers listened carefully and were motivated by all the explanations. **You could see through their eyes they were all looking forward to starting the project in Senegal**. We had a very interesting discussion about all the challenges and specific points SAAM could find in Senegal and in the Don Bosco VET centre of Thiès. But, more importantly, we all agreed that all together can face that and overcome whatever defiance.



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Travel diary ➤

📍 Thiès, Senegal

Finally, we went to visit a **public VET center in Thiès**. Mr. Gueye (Works Manager) welcomed us and introduced to us the different workshops. This school has 3 general sectors (industry, agriculture and tertiary) and around 2000 students including 1300 in VET. **The two schools have exchanges**. For example, their students go to Don Bosco to use some machines in the mechanical section because Don Bosco is better equipped for practice.



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Travel diary ➤

📍 Thiès, Senegal

Thursday, July 8th

Today we worked at the VET center. **We had a working session in the different classrooms and workshops to live and experience the day-to-day at the school.**

We did a very nice activity with the students to talk about:

- What do they know about Europe
- Which are their expectations about their mobility
- What are their fears of going to Europe
- Which are their strengths they want to share when they arrive at a European VET center

Also during the morning, we talked about SAAM with Father Antonio, Father Jean, and François **on the Thiès local radio**. It was such a nice experience and a good dissemination of the project because Françoise was translating the speeches to Wolof (the local language). Nevertheless, the most incredible thing we experienced was the power outage! But like everything in the country, they find fast solutions to every single problem and we recorded the end of the interview with an old voice recorder and the phone light!



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Travel diary ➤

📍 Thiès, Senegal

Finally we met the **Major of Thiès North** where the **VET centre** is located. We talked about SAAM and he offered his hand and support to the project and to Don Bosco center during the mobility procedures. **We achieved our mission of involving almost all the important players to execute the project in Senegal.**



In the afternoon, we went back to the workshops to get in touch with the students. We could do **some interviews of teachers and staff and also some students** of the electricity department gave us a demonstration of an electrical assembly by explaining their group work.

Tonight is the night!

The school prepared a party for us. **They invited all the students to come back in the afternoon to show us a traditional party** with a live band. It was incredible to see some students dancing amazingly. We joined them but the rhythm is quite hard to follow for our European dance style. **This night was a fantastic way to discover the culture.**



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Travel diary ➤

📍 Thiès, Senegal

Friday, July 9th

On Friday, we had **“our day off”**. We woke up early in the morning to take the car for almost three hours to go to **Saint Louis**, one of the most beautiful and touristic places in Senegal and it is a “must” to do when visiting the country.

The team was composed by Father Germain, from Togo, Father Antonio (Spain), the VET centre principal, Father Jean (Benin) the Salesia Community Director, Manon and Sergio. What a team!



We drove through **national roads to get to the north of the country**. In the way, we found so many small villages and we could see the day-to-day life of local people. Small business, fruit everywhere, home-made furniture and a lot of lambs and baobabs are the typical things you can find as a landscape.

The little oceanic city was the political capital of the colony and French West Africa (FWA) until 1902, and capital of Senegal and Mauritania until 1957, before falling into decline due to the transfer of the capital to Dakar.

The city is divided into three parts: The continental side, where all the industry and most of the city life happens. **The colonial island**, where all the historical buildings and monuments are located and **the part of the city placed in the Langue de Barbarie**. Langue de Barbarie is a 600 km (370 mi) long stretch of sand from Nouadhibou in Mauritania to Saint-Louis, over a stretch of 25 km (16 mi) separating the lower Senegal River from the Atlantic Ocean. **There is the city of the fishermen and it is very very crowded and full of young people!**

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Travel diary ➤

📍 Thiès, Senegal

Saturday, July 10th

We woke up very very very early (5am!) to go to Dakar to do the **PCR test**. The PCR test can be done in Thiès but just during the week and because of our flight time we had to go to Dakar. **There, the whole process was really awesome and well-organized.** Despite the low resources compared with the hospitals we have visited in Europe, the organization, waiting rooms and waiting times were even better than the hospitals in Europe! And there were so many people waiting for the test.

Then, we went to have **breakfast at the Salesian Community in Dakar**, where, as in every Salesian school visited, **the community and the people were very welcoming and friendly.**

When arriving in Thiès, Father Jean suggested that we should stop at the artisanal village where **a lot of hand craft and local souvenirs are made.** It was nice to walk and buy some souvenirs in some stands. A great way of ending our fantastic Senegalese experience!



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Travel diary ➤

📍 **Thiès, Senegal**

Sunday, July 11th

For going back home on Sunday, we repeated the same journey: **layover in Lisbon** and finally arriving in Madrid!

BONUS *Basic phrases in Wolof*

Salaamaalekum - Hello!

Maalekum salaam! - Hello! (Reply)

Naka nga def? - How are you? (polite)

Nan nga def? - How are you?

Maa ngi fi/Ma ngui fi - I am fine.

Maa ngi fi rekk. - I am fine.

Jàmm rekk, Alxamdulilaay. - Very fine, thanks to God!

Alxamdulilaay! - Grace to God!

Dieredieuf! - Thank you!

Tiouke na! - That's fine!

Yow nak - And you?

All words taken from: Timo Schmitz: My Archive of Languages (2018 Edition), Berlin 2018.



*See you soon and happy
Summer holidays!*



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