

SAAM celebrates its first international meeting from Nairobi

The Intermediary Meeting of the pilot project that promotes VET mobilities between Africa and Europe was held from the 31st of May to the 4th of June and it gathered for the very first time partners from 20 countries



From Monday, 31st of May, to Friday, 4th of June, SAAM has celebrated its **first international meeting** with a **hybrid event** that focused on explaining the next steps of the project, working together and getting to know each other better. Due to the current COVID circumstances, the meeting was held in person for some SAAM partners, but also it was prepared to be followed online.

SAAM is the **EU funded pilot project** that tests and promotes international mobility for **VET students and teachers between Africa and Europe**. At the moment, the project has achieved many goals such as connecting the partners from both continents during the pandemic thanks to an innovative online methodology called **The Voyage** or managing to **send some first experts** to the African countries to visit the VET centres. The next phase of the project consists of allowing European teachers to spend some time in those African centres and this meeting was needed in order to share all the points of view and for the participants to have a first contact with each other.

Don Bosco Tech Africa hosted the on-site encounter in Nairobi (Kenya) where partners from **14 African and 6 European countries** met in person for a week in the East African country. The hotel where the encounter took place was a complete open space, apart from the individual rooms. A perfect environment that allowed SAAM partners to work safely in the current circumstances because one thing was clear:

SAAM cannot wait any longer. Everyone is willing to proceed to the next steps of the project which will pave the way for the first flow of mobilities of teachers from Europe to Africa in the following months.

The opening session

The opening session started on Monday 31st of May at 11am and it included several **welcoming speeches**.

Father Simon Asira, the DBTA board chairperson and the Provincial of Africa East inaugurated the first session of the meeting. Fr. Simon focused during his intervention on the benefits of travelling: “Travelling lets the possibility to see many things”. And in a more informal tone he shared some fun proverbs that made all those present smile: **“One who never travel will always marry in the neighbourhood”**.



After these first round of speeches, the participants were officially welcomed by the promoters and coordinator team. **Enrique Miana**, CEO of **Mundus**, thanked his colleagues for making SAAM possible and all the participants for being there. **Alfredo Garmendia**, Head of International Department of **San Viator**, described SAAM as a tool to promote legal immigration and said that **“youth is the future”** and that **“SAAM should be a bridge”**. **Béatrice Bellet**, Head of Strategy and Innovation Department of **Mundus**, commented in French that we are all together piloting this new adventure and that she is plenty of hope: **“SAAM will become a better project thanks to you”**. Following the coordinators and promoters, **Lucy Nzambi**, representing **DBTA**, used her turn to welcome all the participants and to give more details about the organisation of the event.



A turning point for SAAM

This ceremony led to days full of work and conversations about the project. The discussion groups and the working activities focused on **analysing several aspects of SAAM** like the mobilities from Europe to Africa and Africa to Europe, the challenges SAAM has to face nowadays or the communication of the project. **The agenda of the week was built in order to identify what should be done next**, but it also included informal activities to encourage mutual acquaintance and public sessions where the European and African institutions were invited.

This first international meeting is a **turning point** for SAAM. An event that welcomes the next phase of the project and that will be remembered as the official coming together of the partners.