

# Travel diary

## Cameroon



Supporting Alliance for African Mobility

FROM: Spain, Asociación Mundus

TO: Cameroon, Institut Technique Don Bosco Ebolowa and CFPJ de Baré

13/03/2021 - 25/03/2021

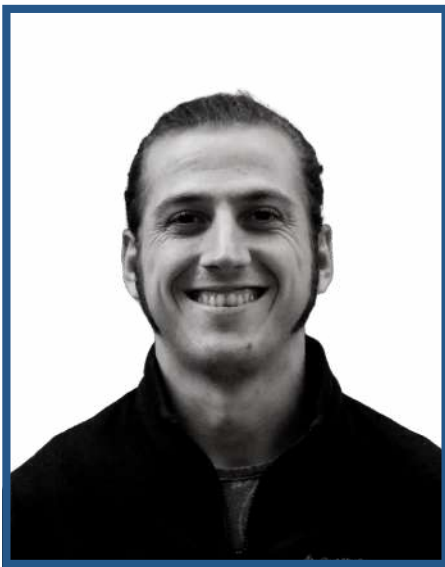
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# Travel diary

## Cameroon

### Let's discover our two mobility experts

*Hugo Fernández and Sergio Lagarde are the perfect team! Their expertise in mobility projects and their enthusiasm make them great SAAM ambassadors in **Cameroon**. Let's get to know them!*



#### **HUGO FERNÁNDEZ** VET/HE Mobility Coordinator

Hugo studied History and Geography and graduated with honors in Physical Geography. He also has a Master in Secondary Education and Vocational Training. Currently, he is also studying Philosophy.

He is only 30 years old but he has many years of experience in non-formal education, being part of the educational team in playrooms and youth centers in Zaragoza and 3 years in the Nature, Arts and Culture space in Sos del Rey Católico. In the Nature Space, he was in charge of managing large groups of students (50-80), scheduling the activities to be carried out during a week-long stay (a sort of "urban" camps)

Since 2017, he has been working in Mundus. Now he is part of the sending department, coordinating the mobilities of 18 educational centers in Aragon.

#### **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 Cameroon

**Sunday, March 14th**

Despite the difficulties due to the pandemic, we managed to make the second experts on-site experience real. This time, we went to **Cameroon**. Of course, given the current circumstances, we took **all feasible precautions** in order to ensure our safety and the safety of all the partners we were going to encounter. We were very enthusiastic about discovering the two centres: **Institut Technique Don Bosco Ebolowa** and **CFPJ in Baré** (partner of PROCEFFA).



We travelled from Madrid to Casablanca and from Casablanca to **Yaoundé**. The journey was long, but we were **rewarded with an amazing view of the African continent** through the plane window.



We arrived on Sunday night and we slept in the **Maison Provinciale** (Province Main House) of Don Bosco in Yaoundé. There, we also met **the Council of Priests**, coordinating Don Bosco in Gabon, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville and the Central African Republic.

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# Travel diary

## Ebolowa, Cameroon

*Monday, March 15th*

### Highlights

As a first learning, we have been gladly surprised by the special interest and support that the Don Bosco school has for every single student. In the words of Father Kevin:

“ *On guide les élèves pour réussir, on nous adapte à le profile de chaque étudiant*

“ *We guide students to succeed, we adapt ourselves to the profile of each student*

On Monday, we took the car with Father Kevin (Don Bosco's Institute principal) for two hours to arrive in **Ebolowa**. We made a quick visit around Ebolowa centre and the workshops and we met **teachers and students**. Afterwards, we joined the **Don Bosco Community** for lunch. We met Father Artur from Poland, the Director of the Don Bosco Ebolowa Community.

During the afternoon, we had **our first meeting** to organize the week and to get a first glimpse of the whole **Don Bosco history and its impact on Africa**. We had time to meet **Roland**, the pedagogic director and **Gervais** (du bureau d'emploi, "Employment office") who is the main contact between the Institute and the companies.



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 **Ebolowa, Cameroon**

*Tuesday, March 16th*



Today, we attended **the 6:00h** mise with Father Kevin, Artur, students and prenovices. This was a really great opportunity to get to know **their culture, their habits and their way of living in community**. We felt very close to them as they guided us through their prayers. After that, we were introduced during **“mot du matin”**, a 10 minutes whole school meeting in the morning just to give some instructions for the day.

At 8:30h, we had the **meeting with “Animateurs Pédagogique”** who are the most experienced teachers here. They are responsible for their **departments** and they plan the **schedule** of their departments' studies. We explained to them what **SAAM** is about and they were really curious about it, **posing a lot of questions** to better understand the project. We spent the rest of the morning in **workshops**, Sergio was at the **mechanic workshop** and Hugo was at the **electric/audiovisual workshop**. There, we had the opportunity to talk directly with students about what they do, what they want to do in the future and how their school life is organized. They had time to show off their knowledge, their projects and all they can do.



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# Travel diary

## Ebolowa, Cameroon

*Tuesday, March 16th*



After lunch, we visited the radio station RCDM of Don Bosco Ebolowa, whose broadcast reaches 150km around Ebolowa, with approximately **100,000 people listening**, among them, there are **future students and parents**. We presented SAAM and we use this opportunity to tell them how it is to be in Cameroon for the first time for people coming from Europe.



At 19:00h we attended the **mise** and then we went all together to have a **very great dinner with prenovices, Father Kevin and Father Artur**.

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# Travel diary

## Ebolowa, Cameroon

### *Wednesday, March 17th*

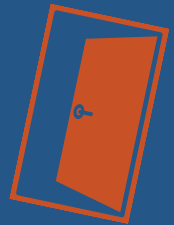
On Wednesday and Thursday, at the school, it was the “**Journée portes ouvertes**” (Doors Open Day).

In the meanwhile, we had a very busy morning outside the school. We visited the **Regional department for VET and Work** to talk about job placement for young people, the country’s offer for vocational training and the assistance and guidance they provide. The regional coordinator has stated that the main difficulties for the VET students is the “**job orientation training**”

### DOORS OPEN DAY

➔ All the VET students from the different sectors offered at the school present and explain in detail their projects.

➔ Parents, other young people, companies’ representatives and local and regional organisations visit the school to see and understand the work and the training taught at Don Bosco Institute of Ebolowa.



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## Ebolowa, Cameroon

### *Wednesday, March 17th*

On Wednesday, we also visited **two companies**, where **students from DB school** and other institutes were doing their internships, to talk about the **relation between VET schools and companies and the training needed** by the companies to optimize the job placement of students. They made us know they are looking forward to receiving students.



LUMBER COMPANY 

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## Ebolowa, Cameroon






**Wednesday, March 17th**

Finally, we visited **"Le Fond National d'Emploi"** (National Employment Fund) and **"La Délégation Regionale du Ministère d'Emploi et de la Formation Professionnelle"** (Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training).



### NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT FUND

 JOB

-  It is a public-private institution in charge of mentoring, supporting and advising people in their search for a job. It is a free service.
-  It includes 16 agencies (local and regional).
-  They have several action programs with different funding (rural labour development, vocational training, etc.).
-  They have sectoral meetings and seminars with the heads of the companies.
-  They focus their efforts on the following actions:
  - Guiding individuals in the search of training programs.
  - Teaching people how to get a job.
  - A big database of companies looking for people and people looking for companies (like a national LinkedIn).
  - Helping entrepreneurs to get financing and investment for their businesses.

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# Travel diary

## Ebolowa, Cameroon

### Thursday, March 18th

On Thursday, like every day, we got up at 6:00h to participate in the **school community**, we attended the **mise** and then we listened to the "**Mot du matin**". Afterwards, Sergio went to the **mechanics** workshop and Hugo went to the **carpentry** workshop to know exactly how a school day is carried out at the centre. Once again, we saw that learning is eminently practical and that theory and practice are only a few minutes apart:

#### Learning by doing

After lunch we had a **meeting with all the VET students** of the centre, to explain in detail the SAAM project, solving all their doubts and clarifying information that the teachers had already told them. **We could see the motivation in their eyes.**

In the afternoon we visited a **public high school in Ebolowa** together with the **Minister of Education**. We visited all the **facilities**, seeing everything that could be improved, and seeing all those good practices that could be implemented elsewhere.



Finally, we visited the **home of one of the students** of the Institut, **Lidia**, who despite having studied **Law at university**, has enrolled in the **Audiovisual Vocational Training** to obtain a practical knowledge that will allow her to complement her training. As always, a **spectacular welcome** and a closeness that characterizes the people of Cameroon. We had time to chat with her family about **education, job placement and family planning** as well as to **taste typical (very spicy) traditional dishes of the area.**

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# Travel diary

## Ebolowa, Cameroon

**Friday, March 19th**



Friday was a sort of a **day off** to discover the city of **Ebolowa** and some of the **beautiful places and landscapes** this region has. We visited the city's main buildings and we were amazed by the beauty and the colours of all of them.

We went to the **prison** where Don Bosco has a social project and the **big market** where we could experience the daily life of the people from Ebolowa.


Then, we went to **Nkolandom** ("The mountain of elegance") to visit one of the most beautiful areas in the region. This city is surrounded by mountains and the green has here more varieties than anywhere. The prime minister built a **tourist centre** with museums, great restaurants with local food and big gardens in order to attract tourists to the region.

At the end of the day, we had a **very nice meal** at the **Don Bosco Community** to say **goodbye** to our friends. We sang, danced, laughed and they gave us a present to remember the experience. **Obviously, their warm welcome, love, care and good moments have already made this experience unforgettable.**



### DID YOU KNOW



 *La petite Afrique!* This is how Cameroon is known due to the fact that you can find everything there. It is the country of diversity, because of the big variety of landscapes, animals, plants and trees and because it hosts so many different local tribes, ethnicities and people from many different countries.

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# Travel diary

## Ebolowa - Yaoundé - Baré

**Saturday, March 20th**



The day started early to **join the community for the pray and the last breakfast at the school**. We had our last cup of coffee at the office of **Father Artur** and we packed our bags to **leave Ebolowa** (feeling more thankful than ever). The **PROCEFFA team** (Barka Honore, Project Coordinator and fully responsible for SAAM in PROCEFFA and Guy, the driver), picked us up in the school.

We had the first words with them to start to get to know each other during the journey to **Yaoundé**. There, in the capital, we met the **whole PROCEFFA team** in their HQ before leaving to Baré. We had the opportunity to **meet them, understand better the organization, activities and members and we presented SAAM in detail and solve all the questions**.



We left Yaoundé and we had a very long **journey to Baré** (almost 6 hours). In the car, we had the chance **to exchange thoughts and good conversations with Honore and Guy** about SAAM, Cameroon, the education... And we were amazed by the wonderful landscapes that were with us the whole time!



Once in **Baré**, we went to **Nkongsamba**, the main city of the region where the hotel was. There, **Calvin and David, from the CFPJB (VET centre from Baré)** were waiting for welcoming us. We had a **great dinner** and we went straight to sleep after a very exciting and tiring day.

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# Travel diary

## Baré, Cameroon

*Sunday, March 21st*

### Highlights

On Sunday, we discovered many details about PROCEFFA. In summary, PROCEFFA is a platform that brings together different actors of VET in Cameroon, providing an education based on two main pillars: Integral Training and Dual Training.

The day started with a very nice **breakfast at Baré**, in the VET centre, cooked by the students of the Hospitality module taught at the centre. **It was incredible!**

Although it was Sunday, the Baré VET centre team was ready to have the **first working session**. We met **Lisette Nkoue**, major of Baré, secretary-treasurer of PROCEFFA and president of **ADEFE - NLATI**. This last organisation is one of the 17 members of **PROCEFFA** and they participate in SAAM.



We presented **SAAM** in detail and **Honoré**, project technician of PROCEFFA, presented the whole impact of **PROCEFFA** in Cameroon, their mission and activities and a very nice presentation about Cameroon. David, the principal of the centre and responsible for the **agriculture program** were also in the meeting.

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# Travel diary

## Baré, Cameroon


### *Sunday, March 21st*

After this very busy and interesting working session, **we headed to the awesome and giant waterfall Ekom Falls**. A very beautiful landscape spotted by a wonderful waterfall.

Afterwards, we met the **Traditional Chief of Baré** and exchange some thoughts about traditions and the overall situation of the region. Then, we went to visit a **Women Association** from the region of Baré who were **dancing and singing**. We had the opportunity to meet the people, dance with them, try local food, and get an overall idea of the daily life of the region. We enjoyed so much this event, dancing and laughing with the locals! **No doubts, an incredible day!**



### DID YOU KNOW

 The film "Tarzan" was filmed in this amazing landscape. 



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# Travel diary

## Baré, Cameroon

### Monday, March 22nd

Even though, we still have not mentioned the COVID-19, it obviously exists here too. Today, we had to do our **COVID tests** in order to travel back to Spain. Both **Honore and the SAAM logistics team** have worked hard to organize this appointment and make it smooth and easy. We left **Nkongsamba** at 5:30 pm to go to **Douala**, do the test and come back at 14:30 at **Baré**. A very long journey just for that, but it is the reality we are currently living in.

Once we got back, we had lunch and we got **some time with the students and the trainers**. With the students, we had a very nice moment to **present SAAM** in detail, focusing on **Phase 3 (students mobility)**, solving all the questions and enjoying some nice activities.



We divided the students into four groups for a guided activity. They reflect in groups about:

- **Fears** of travelling to Europe
- **Expectations** about the project
- What they know about **Europe**
- Which are the **strengths** they are proud to share with the European partners

Finally, we spent some time with **all the trainers and teachers** to talk about SAAM and its **implementation in the Baré VET centre**. We solved questions and we listened to them. They talked as well about their **fear and expectations** and they are all looking forward to receiving the EU staff and to travelling to Europe.



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# Travel diary

 **Baré, Cameroon**

*Tuesday, March 23rd*

On Tuesday, we had a very busy and super interesting day! After **presenting the project to trainers, coordinators and students** and after getting in touch with a bit of the culture of the region, the day was reserved to get to know the **stakeholders** around the VET centre.

We started the day with a technical meeting with the **agricultural department** to understand in depth the methodology followed in this VET school. We both were amazed! In this school, students follow **a methodology that consists of 2 weeks in the VET school and 2 weeks in a company**. They get to visit **9 different companies** each year!



Moreover, we had the chance to visit a **medium-size company in the region**. This company works with **coffee and cacao**, two of the main plantations in the region. The company team showed us the whole procedure of the coffee and the cacao before being exported or sold to companies for their final process. This is a **very important economic resource** for the region.

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# Travel diary

## Baré, Cameroon

*Tuesday, March 23rd*

After having lunch in the VET centre again, we visited another company in charge of **hosting the agriculture students** from the school. They have a specific way of teaching called “**Integral Training**” where the students live the whole experience during the stage: not just working 8 hours in the company, but also living with the farmers. **We visited the crops, got to know the workers and farmers and understood the whole process.**

Then, we visited two **poultry farms** that also host students and we understood the local procedure to raise **chickens**. Of course, all these interesting places had **delicious meals and local drinks** included. **This is the hospitality and kindness from Cameroon!**



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# Travel diary

## Baré, Cameroon

### Wednesday, March 24th

Our last day was the time to say goodbye and to do a global evaluation of our stay in Cameroon. We also visited the CFPJ school in Baré. A proof of the hospitality that best described people in Cameroon is the amazing gift they gave us: **these incredible handmade shirts.**



During the rest of the day, we travelled to Douala to pick our **COVID tests results**, we had a **fantastic lunch** and we went back to the **hotel** to rest for a few hours before going to the **airport**. To avoid boring details about our journey from Cameroon to Spain, we are going to end this diary with a little bit of information about **Cameroonian tasty food**. **Much more interesting!**



- **Banane plantain**

Delicious fried sweet banana served as an accompaniment to all main dishes.

- **Ndole**

Stew made with nuts and various meats or fish (or shellfish such as dried shrimp). The main ingredient in this preparation is bitter *vernonia*. If *vernonia* is not available, spinach is usually used. It is usually served hot and is considered the national dish of Cameroon.

- **Chicken DG**

Stewed chicken with lots of vegetables and a spicy touch.

- **Cassava dough**

It is consumed as "bread", an accompaniment to any dish, it is offered rolled in banana leaves.



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