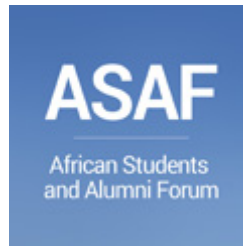


# ASAF's milestones of 2019

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## **Dear ASAF members and friends,**

In the last few months, since our last newsletter, the African Students and Alumni Forum (ASAF) has made some major steps. The grounds for the development of ASAF were laid and ASAF touched some major milestones. ASAF is a forum, that is still in development, but already offering opportunities for exchange, collaboration and capacity building to African beneficiaries of international mobility scholarships funded by the European Union.

## **A message from Brussels by Fiorella Perotto (DG EAC):**

At the beginning of 2019, ASAF was little more than an aspiration from the African Union, the European Union and a small but determined group of volunteers. As we reach the end of the year, ASAF is becoming a promising reality with record numbers of registered members across the African continent.

While increasing its visibility within the African higher education community, ASAF is now also laying the foundations for future partnerships with public and private stakeholders to ensure that young people in Africa are adequately skilled to find a job or create their own company and actively support their communities.

In a globalised world where lifelong learning and people's cross-border exchanges are major factors for prosperity and peace, ASAF is also reflecting on how it can make its know-how available to policy makers to help them enhance and modernise education policies in Africa in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Continental Education Strategy (CESA 2016-2025).

With best wishes to all the ASAF volunteers without whom none of this would be possible.

## **Most previous milestone: the four regional workshops across Africa**

To sharpen the vision, the mission statement and the identity of ASAF considering the diversity of the African continent ASAF called for four regional Workshops to co-create the future of the Forum.

Out of more than 340 applications about 100 participants were selected to take part in one of the four regional workshops across Africa. The workshops were held in Accra, Rabat, Pretoria and Addis Ababa between 8<sup>th</sup> November until 8<sup>th</sup> December. The four workshops groups were very diverse trying to cover different criteria such as gender,

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disability, mobility programmes and types as well as countries of origin. In the end 36 different countries were represented leaving some additional scope to strive for an even higher diversity. The workshops also addressed the participants in French and English to ease a wider outreach.

Thanks to the participants' commitment, motivation and active participation the workshops were a full success and very productive. In order to assess the different opinions and perspectives on ASAF's vision, mission, membership and identity, the content of every workshop in the four different cities were set up the same. The main goal was to shape ASAF and set ASAF's base to further develop and grow. In all four workshops, the participants worked on ASAF's mission, vision, membership and identity. The similarities and differences in the outcomes reflect the richness of Africa. Furthermore, the participants worked on and shared their personal project ideas in regard to the future ASAF local projects. At every workshop, a high table session with relevant stakeholders in cooperation with the European Delegations or National Erasmus+ Offices took place. This set the grounds for future collaborations and discussions with significant stakeholders in the landscape of Higher Education, employment and important local and continental organisations and networks.

For further information about the outcome of the discussions on vision, mission, membership and identity, please stay tuned for the upcoming report.

## **What did the participants think of the workshops:**

**Cosmas Kombat**, participant in Accra:

What were your take aways of the workshop?

"The ASAF ACCRA workshop- offered a regional platform to shaping the future of the association. There are existing national and regional higher education trainings and youth entrepreneurship opportunities that ASAF could take and engage with to reach their goal.

Participants are willing to engage further on ASAF projects and activities in their respective countries."

What was your personal experience?

"Diversity of workshop participants enriched the discussions. I was impressed by the number of mobility stories within Africa and Europe that most participants told and how these have empowered their performance at work in their various countries. The motivation and interest of participants to ensure that ASAF develops into a vibrant regional organisation."

How would you describe the energy of the group and the workshop?

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"The groups were very active in all discussions and respected each other views. Participants were knowledgeable in organisational development and contributed to all workshop themes."

**Hanan Meckawy**, participant in Rabat:

" I was honoured to be among a selected few to take part in the ASAF strategy kick off workshop that took place in Bonn, where I recognized ASAF's role and position in the wider AU-EU Strategy, the benefits and challenges linked to international mobility in Africa and the role ASAF could play in improving access, relevance and impact of Higher Education. Aiming to create a connection between African mobility alumni, integrating policy makers and highlighting their potential to implement projects adapted to the local needs.

I was privileged, as well, to be assigned as a co-moderator at the regional workshop in Rabat, with the aim of developing ASAF's strategy through creating the vision, mission, values and Identity. Creating projects ideas, elaborate the project implementation phases.

During my thrilling experience, I sensed the African youth's enthusiasm, high spirits, and commitment to be engaged in the European dialogues, employability, future developments and individual/group capacity building projects in an ambiance of trust and sense of purpose. I am grateful for being selected to give a speech during the meeting that was held in Erasmus Office in Rabat, with the EU delegation and enterprises stakeholders in Rabat. The interventions among ASAF's members, the Erasmus+ team and EU delegation were centred on the future collaboration and interactions in the field of higher education.

In ASAF workshops, we dreamed big, had a clear language, infused it with passion and made it inspiring, aligned it with ASAF's values and goals. And we are looking for communicating our vision statement internally to all ASAF's members and externally to give an IMPACT.

ASAF's role is integrated with my role in the field of higher education, and I'm happy to give back as a former Erasmus+ beneficiary by taking part of any volunteer work related to the newly established ASAF."

**Felix Donkor**, participant in Pretoria:

What were your take aways of the workshop?

"It was clear that the youth of Africa are not resting in their quest to find opportunities to collaborate, co-create and contribute meaningfully to the development of the continent. I observed that the notion of skilled young people always in search of greener pastures abroad was trumped by a different narrative of African youth seeking to remain and make a difference in their communities."

What was your personal experience?

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"I was impressed with the inclusivity and rich diversity of the participants. I made great friends and learnt so much from the stimulating and though provoking discussions that took place. I personally believe ASAF is the quintessential forum of Africa-EU cooperation that makes room for upwardly mobile young people to contribute to the larger goal of sustainable development. I am not surprised that ASAF has been trending since the launch of these strategic workshops—and by all indications— it is here to stay as it redefines the role of staff and alumni in the continent's development especially from the perspective of the Global South."

How would you describe the energy of the group and the workshop?

"The atmosphere was electric and full of positive vibes! Moreover, this was an excellent workshop with practical exercises by experienced facilitators and useful insights that can benefit participants' professional and personal life; putting them on a higher pedestal. Awesome stuff!

I highly recommend ASAF workshops and related activities and encourage all and sundry to seize the future opportunities presented by ASAF by actively engaging with it.

#Viva ASAF# Globally relevant, locally responsive."

**Apiyo Okwiri**, participant in Addis Ababa:

What were your take aways of the workshop?

"The show of commitment by the African Union to give a platform and support to ASAF demonstrated in the speech by Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo, Director, Human Resources Science and Technology Department, African Union Commission and the affirmation of continued support by the European Union through Mr. Thomas Huyghebaert, Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to the African Union."

What was your personal experience?

"Represented were 3 regions and emergence of further need urgent to collaborate at personal and individual level within the regions and also with other regions not present even beyond the ASAF framework to leverage on the skills and expertise gained through mobility."

How would you describe the energy of the group and the workshop?

"The age spectrum was skewed towards the upper age limit and majority were working in higher education. However, the crossover of the discussions were anchored on the need for open access to information, increasing mobility through education, concerted efforts towards diffusing the continents demographic time-bomb. The teams were fast at arriving at how to start and formulate their discussions resulting quick turn-arounds and having common understanding."

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## Achievements of the past months:

- **Promotion of Membership and Applications:** [community.asaf.africa/](http://community.asaf.africa/)
- **ASAF's landing page:** [www.asaf.africa](http://www.asaf.africa)
- **Social Media Channels:**  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ASAFafrica](http://www.facebook.com/ASAFafrica)  
Instagram: [www.instagram.com/asaf\\_africa](http://www.instagram.com/asaf_africa)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/AfricaAsaf](http://twitter.com/AfricaAsaf)
- **ASAF's Online Community:** [community.asaf.africa/](http://community.asaf.africa/)
- **Stakeholder Need Assessment:**  
The needs and expectations of significant stakeholders regarding the role of ASAF were assessed.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Newsletter**
- **First Strategy Kick-off Meeting** in Bonn, 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> September with 8 participants: Strategies of balanced membership involvement for the regional workshops were evaluated in order to safeguard a pluralistic engagement and discussion. Furthermore, first ideas were gathered on ASAF's future vision, mission and identity.
- **Four Regional Workshops across Africa** in Accra, Rabat, Pretoria and Addis Ababa: please see paragraph above for more information

## What is planned for the upcoming months:

- **Local Projects**
- Development and launch of **ASAF's website**
- Development of **ASAF's Logo and Corporate Design**

## Erasmus+: EU will invest over €3 billion in young Europeans to study or train abroad in 2020:

“The European Commission published its 2020 [call for proposals](#) for the [Erasmus+](#) programme. 2020 is the last year of the current European Union programme for mobility and cooperation in education, training, youth and sport. The expected budget of over €3 billion, an increase of 12% compared to 2019, will provide even more opportunities for young Europeans to study, train or gain professional experience abroad. As part of the 2020 call for proposals, the Commission will launch a second pilot on [European Universities](#). Moreover, the EU aims to create 35,000 opportunities for African students and staff to participate in the programme as part of the [Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#).” For more information check out their website [here](#).

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## Testimonies



**Yeluma Mary Ntali**

**Age 32, from Cameroon,  
Mobility: Tanzania 2014/16**

„I see ASAF as an organ of change and excellence in the education system of Africa and the world at large for a sustainable world. It is crucial for us all to join ASAF to bring the change we need in Africa, for it is said if we want to go further then we have to go as a group“



**Aderemi Raji-Oyelade**

**Age 57, from Nigeria,  
mobility: Croatia 2018**

“The mobility experience allowed for inter-cultural exchange of expertise and academic skills.  
ASAF is important as the human resource and capital base for the inspiration of beneficial change and the achievement of sustainable transformation across Africa.  
It offers opportunities, promotes cooperation and engenders unity beyond regional borders.”



**Asmaa Mohamed**

**Age 39, from Egypt,  
Mobility: Poland 2018**

“Believing in your dream is the path to achieve.  
Networking not only helps you to discover new cultures and thoughts but also to challenge your capabilities.”



**RAKOTONARY,  
Anjamanana Felana**

**Age 27, from Madagascar,  
Mobility: Spain 2016/17**

“I joined ASAF because it offers us opportunities to help strengthen Africa’s common identity.  
It is a place where I expand my network and that allowed me to have a personal and professional development. “

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We are proud to announce that ASAF has received many applications and has a current large number of who are ASAF members. We are still receiving applications every day, which shows that ASAF is growing with every day! Thanks to all the members and active volunteers and their commitment and engagement, ASAF has great momentum to strive and grow to a great Forum!

So, continue to be active and connected and stay tuned and follow us on [Facebook](#) or for our members on the ASAF [online community](#).

ASAF needs members and friends like you!

All the best,  
Your ASAF-Team

Contact information:

Topics concerning general questions about ASAF or mobility:

[info@asaf.africa](mailto:info@asaf.africa) or call +49 221 25997921

Technical assistance: [it-support@asaf.africa](mailto:it-support@asaf.africa) or call +49 221 139319-0

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