

# Europe and Africa: One continent in the university education

## The ERASMUS+ Programme

The Erasmus Programme is the EU programme that allows students to travel to countries in the European Union. Erasmus+ is the new programme combining all the EU's current schemes for education, training, youth and sport, which was started in January 2014 and will be held for the period 2021-2027. It stands for European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students+. Mobility has positive effects on educational, social, personal and professional development, in that it enhances knowledge, skills and attitudes, improves employability, helps confidence-building and independence, stimulates curiosity and innovation, fosters the understanding of other people, and builds a sense of European belonging. Building on the success of the programme in the period 2014-2020, Erasmus+ strengthens its efforts to increase the opportunities offered to more participants and a wider range of organisations, focusing on its qualitative impact and contributing to more inclusive and cohesive, greener and digitally fit societies.

The Programme is a key component supporting the objectives of the European Education Area, the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027, the European Union Youth Strategy and the European Union Work Plan for Sport (2021-24).

As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, access to education is proving, more than ever, to be essential to ensuring a swift recovery, while promoting equal opportunities for all. As part of this recovery process, the Erasmus+ programme takes its inclusive dimension to a new horizon by supporting opportunities for the personal, socio-educational and professional development of people in Europe and beyond, aiming to leave no one behind.

The first annual work programme of Erasmus+ 2021-2027 has been adopted by the European Commission. With a budget of 26.2 billion EUR, it provides nearly the double funding compared to the predecessor programme 2014-2020 (14.7 billion EUR). Furthermore, it is complemented by about 2.2 billion EUR from the EU external instruments. The programme has been modernised and will support learning mobility and cross-cooperation projects.

Erasmus+ is a very wide programme, covering a diverse range of actions. How you can take part depends broadly on following factors:

1. if you are applying by yourself or on behalf of an organisation
2. in which country you or your organisation is based.
3. What tangible skills development programs you are implementing?

The Erasmus+ program is managed by the European Commission (the EU's executive body), the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), a series of National Agencies in Programme countries, and a series of National Offices in some Partner countries.

Africa has been participating in Erasmus+ for many years. The strong international dimension under Erasmus+ in the 2021-2027 period will allow education and training institutions across Europe to really cooperate through their work in Africa, strengthen Europe's reputation as a reliable partner, support the green and digital transitions and tackle current and future crises. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to some 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, eight per cent of the world's natural Gas and 12 per cent of the

world's oil reserves. The continent has 40 percent of the world's gold and up to 90 percent of its chromium and platinum, but it is the poorest continent and that is why Africa is called Resource Curse continent.

Furthermore, Africa has the youngest population in the world, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30. Such a high number of young people are unskilled consequently unemployed. The main challenges that Africa's youth is confronting inadequate or irrelevant skills development. Erasmus program can be very profitable if it is planned based on skills and professional trainings (TVET) needs appropriate know how suitable to the industrialization of the local resource, biotechnology, biomedicine, Agrozootecnics, and other relevant services that can lead socio-economic development of the country.

In the new programming period Sub-Sahara Africa is anticipated to have the single largest budget under Erasmus+ with nearly a quarter of the €2.2 billion of funding. The enhanced phase of Erasmus+ will aim to improve skills, competences and employability of higher and vocational education students, and training of academic and administrative staff. In addition, it will also focus on enhancing the quality and relevance of higher education institutions' education programs to the labour market. Helping education programs by African institutions become relevant to their society, strengthening and boosting innovation in higher education, improving governance, leadership and management of the institutions, is another objective. Among other things, it will also fund the mobility of individuals between EU Member States and Africa through mobility agreements. Students at all levels of education from undergraduate to postgraduate, and both academic and non-teaching staff will benefit, the official disclosed.

The countries of the sub-Saharan region are becoming more and more important for European policy. Funding programmes are massively increased to strengthen intercontinental cooperation. While in the last programme period of Erasmus+ (2014-2020) around 7% of the budget from external funds was reserved for sub-Saharan Africa (it was much too low to meet demand) up to 23% of international funds will be available for this region in the new phase that runs until 2027. Demand had already far exceeded the available funds before as the political focus turned increasingly towards Africa. Additional special funding for higher education cooperation was provided in the past three years, such as the Horn of Africa and West Africa windows. In 2018 the then Commission President Juncker announced that cooperation with Africa would be decisively expanded in the years to come. The aim is to increase annual mobility between Europe and Africa from around 16,000 to 105,000 by 2027.

This prioritisation will now have an impact on the distribution of funds in the new programme period of Erasmus+. Most of the international measures of Erasmus+ will start in 2022 and the measures will be financed by external funds ('Heading 6'). Around 87% of the 2.2 thousand million euros planned for this purpose are reserved for higher education. In the area of international higher education mobility of Erasmus+ (KA171) sub-Saharan Africa is the most highly funded region with half a thousand million euros – around a quarter of all funds.

In addition to Erasmus+ mobility the European Commission

will also provide special support for capacity building in higher education. 160 million euros will be reserved for sub-Saharan countries. Another funding scheme is Erasmus Mundus. Here, higher education institutions from Africa cannot only participate in the consortium on an equal footing under the new Erasmus+ programme but also assume the coordination of an Erasmus+ master's degree course. Students from the region can apply for a full-time scholarship – just like students from all over the world.

Between African countries (Sub-saharan countries) participating in Erasmus+, we have Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Congo – the Democratic Republic of the Côte

d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

## Sitogrphahy

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu>

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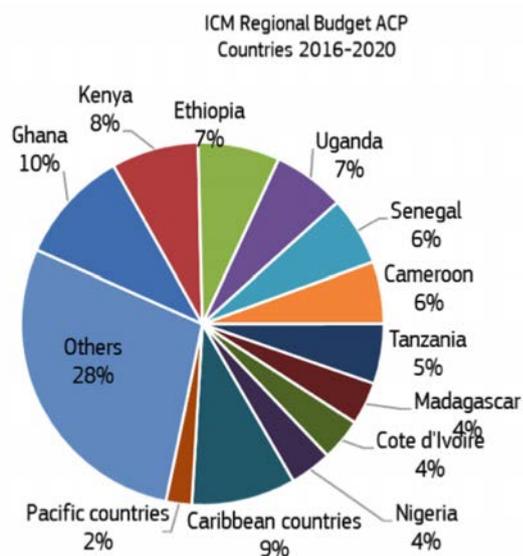
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Erasmus+ budget allocation 570,2 M€ for Sub-Saharan Africa 2021-2027

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