



# SAAS

SPONSOR AN AFRICAN SCHOLAR

## KILQUADE PARISH SUPPORTS THE EDUCATION OF 43 STUDENTS IN MOMBASA, KENYA.



SAAS was founded 16 years ago by two Irish people, one of whom is the current executive director Gina Woods. In the early years SAAS was able to sponsor only a very few students but thanks to the support of Kilquade Parish and other sponsors SAAS is now educating 183 children all of whom come from the Kongowea slum in Mombasa, Kenya.

SAAS acts as a conduit for donors such that each child supported knows who their sponsor(s) are. These sponsors are sent the school reports together with a letter from the student each term. The SAAS executives on the ground, Maria and Silvia, carefully monitor the children's performance, providing encouragement, support and even admonishment where required.

One of the very special features of SAAS is that they provide computer and maths classes for the sponsored children and also for other children from the Kongowea slum. The teachers for these classes are previously sponsored children who provide their services for free. This creates an eco-system of self-help.

Since its inception SAAS has supported 2383 students through 111 schools and 33 colleges with over one thousand children upskilled through the computer courses.

A key feature for supporters of SAAS is that all sums donated go directly towards the students' education. This is because the salaries and overheads are covered by separate donors

Currently 60 Kilquade parishioners are sponsoring 43 students. Amongst the former students, one was recently ordained a priest and some others have gone into professional employment





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Sylvia & Maria



Richard Hayes speaks with SAAS graduates.

## FR. JOHN VISITS SAAS IN MOMBASA

The drive into Mombasa was a daredevil ride through traffic competing with the motorbikes and Matatus (taxis) but thanks to Google Maps we arrived at our destination: SAAS operations centre. Having corresponded with Maria and Sylvia it was great to finally meet them. We were given a warm welcome by a number of young graduates from the SAAS programme who were full of joy and thanks for all the sponsors who had enabled them to fulfil their dream of completing secondary school.

## PRESENTATION OF PHONES AND COMPUTERS TO SAAS

Through the kind donation of a number of sponsors we were able to present a number of phones and reconditioned computers to the SAAS which will be used in their computer classes for young people. To date SAAS has enabled over 1000 to learn computer skills which are held in the Centre three times a day and are lead by past graduates of the scheme.



Presentation of phones and computers



Students learning computer skills

## VALUE OF ONLINE SKILLS

The importance of teaching computer and internet skills opens up the job market for graduates not just locally but puts them on the global market. Just recently a number of the graduates have secured work with an Irish company as software developers.



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## VISIT TO FAMILY HOMES

We got the opportunity to visit the families of some of the students we sponsor. This was a real eye opener as it gave an insight into the daily challenges and hardships they have to face living in the slums of Mombasa. Each family we visited lived in one room about the size of a garage where all living took place. Children slept on the floor adults on the bed. Ten families shared one toilet. Most of the families we visited are surviving on €3 a day so sending a child to secondary school is virtually impossible without the support of a sponsor.



All the families we visited were so grateful for the great generosity and kindness of their sponsors. Thanks that was often spoken through tears. The level of poverty they have to endure and the conditions they live with was heart breaking to listen to. The families know that the only way for their children to have a chance to break that cycle of poverty is through education. They are eternally grateful that their children have been give a chance through the generosity of people in Kilquade parish and beyond.



## GREATEST GIFT WE AS SPONSORS GIVE

The lasting impression from this flying visit was that the greatest gift our sponsors have given these young people is the gift of hope. They have a chance to build their own future, a better future for themselves and their family in completing their education. Most hunger to learn more and to go to university. It would be wonderful if we can continue to nourish that hunger for education through our sponsorship and help break the cycle of poverty.



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## SO MUCH ACHIEVED – SO MUCH STILL TO DO

The regular letters from our SAAS students to their Sponsors tell how much our sponsorship means to these young people, and how it translates into encouragement, driving their enthusiasm for learning, despite their severe hardships and unsupportive environment.

Our parishioners, the present sponsors, can feel truly gratified in making their monthly or annual financial gift to SAAS, when they see the continuing results of their generosity. They are helping to bring the benefits of a basic education to very deserving young people.

Few things in life are more important than education. It is the key to the future for these students, their release from deep poverty.

## Would you like to join us in this enterprise ?

Before we can accept new students from the waiting list, we need to raise €470 per annum, per student, to fund the required four years tuition. Could you join our sponsors and commit to €35 or more per month for a few years ? Or make an annual renewable donation as a Sponsor?

Your sponsorship will be allocated to an individual student, who will send you a progress report each school term through the SAAS office.

## OUR STUDENTS USE A VARIETY OF LAPTOPS, NEW AND SECOND-HAND.

## CAN YOU HELP US SOURCE MORE LAPTOPS?

## WE WILL COLLECT AND ARRANGE DELIVERY TO MOMBASA.

**FUNDS:** As the number of students increases, so do the running costs, can you organise a fundraising event, through your neighbourhood, workplace or school, to assist us in funding the very basic facilities which our students enjoy, and the standard of teaching which we currently achieve?

Simply leave your name and contact details at:

**The Parish office  
St Patrick's Church,  
Kilquade  
Co. Wicklow  
A63 TF61  
Or contact**

**Vanessa Hayes on  
0874187616**