

SPONSOR AN AFRICAN SCHOLAR

May – Aug 2025

DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

Issue 46



Some of our Form 4 candidates engage in a group discussion during the SAAS August holiday tuition at the office as they prepare for their KCSE exams this November.

Back to school – Term 3

Wishing our KCSE candidates success

As schools across Kenya officially reopened on August 26, 2025, following a three-week Term Two break, we are thrilled to see our students transition back into learning mode with renewed energy and focus.

At SAAS, we were especially grateful to welcome many of our scholars home for the holidays, where they actively participated in a robust lineup of enrichment activities—including our two-week Holiday Tuition Program, as well as counselling and peer talk sessions designed to support their academic, emotional, and social growth.

Term Three at a Glance

- Term Duration: 9 weeks
- Closing Date: Friday, October 24, 2025
- Holiday Break: October 25, 2025 – January 1, 2026

This shortened term allows room for the national examination period, which begins shortly after schools close.

We proudly announce that 34 SAAS scholars will sit for their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams this year. The exams will run from November 3 to November 21, 2025, marking a significant milestone in our students' academic journeys.

These young men and women have demonstrated resilience, discipline, and a hunger for excellence. We are confident that they will make SAAS and their communities proud.

To our KCSE candidates:
You have come so far, and the finish line is in sight. Believe in your preparation, trust in your ability, and know that we’re all cheering you on every step of the way.

October Visitors Alert!

We are elated to announce that we will be receiving a team of donors and sponsors from the Kilquade and Greystones parishes in Ireland, who will be visiting Kenya in the month of October.

While in the country on holiday, the team is expected to pay a courtesy visit to our office in Mombasa to catch up on the progress of our work.

During their visit, they will have the opportunity to meet with some of the students they sponsor and visit a few of the schools where these students are enrolled.

This visit marks a special moment of collaboration, gratitude, and mutual learning. We are very much looking forward to an enriching exchange and strengthening the bonds that keep our mission thriving.

Stay tuned for updates and highlights from their visit in our next issue!



Our Donors and Sponsors pose for a group photo with students of Maweni Secondary School during their past visit to Kenya.



Students pose for a group photo before they head home after classes during the two weeks SAAS August holiday tuition program at the office in Mombasa, Kenya.

SAAS August Holiday Tuition 2025

Empowering scholars. Renewing Hope. Reigniting Excellence

We successfully implemented an Academic Action Plan through a two-week August Holiday Tuition Program, held from August 4 to August 15, in response to a noticeable decline in academic performance among some of the sponsored students across various high schools in Kenya.

The program aimed to support students in improving their academic outcomes by offering focused revision and tutoring in key subjects. Five experienced teachers from top national schools in the Coast region facilitated the tuition sessions, alongside senior SAAS students who volunteered to serve as peer tutors.

On average, 86 students attended each day, engaging actively in various subject areas.

Program Objectives

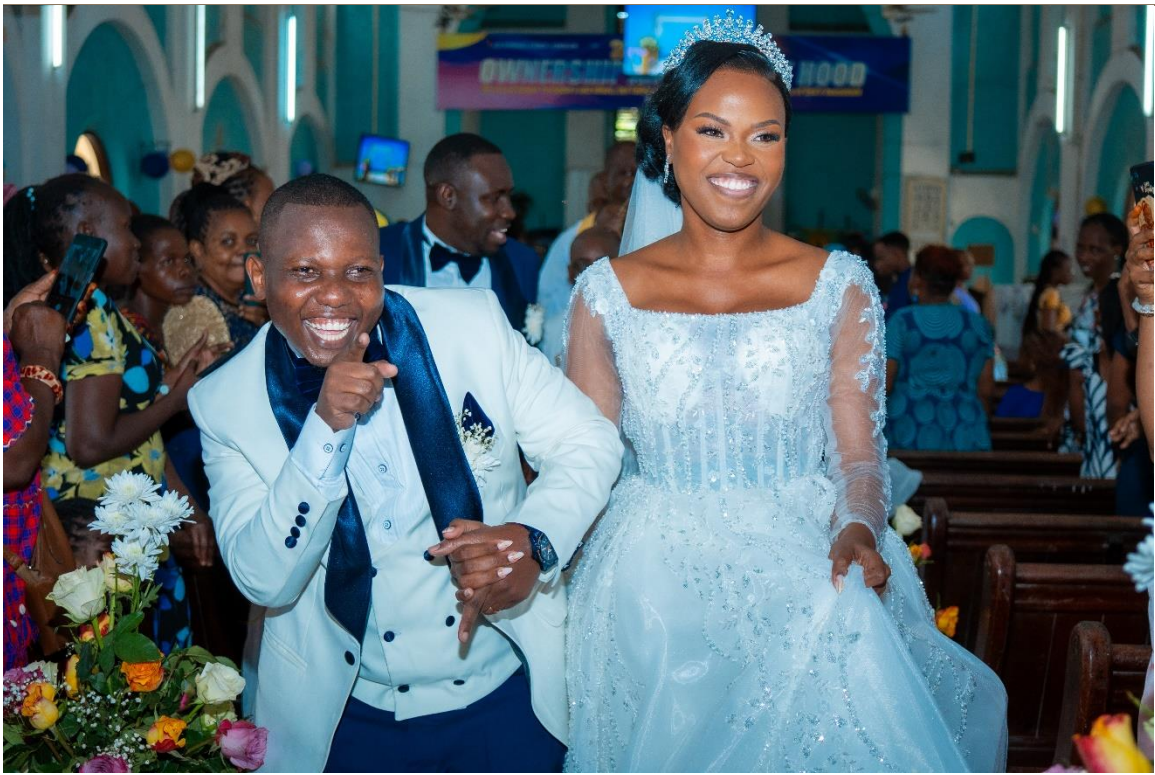
- Provide targeted academic intervention for underperforming students
- Reinforce key topics across all major subjects
- Foster a disciplined, yet engaging learning environment
- Encourage peer-to-peer and student-teacher collaboration
- Identify learning gaps and initiate remediation
- Offer psychosocial support through counselling and peer mentorship

The subjects covered included Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Geography, Business Studies, History, Religious Studies, English, and Kiswahili.

Impact & Achievements

The tuition program was not only academically enriching but also emotionally uplifting. Students left the sessions feeling more confident, inspired, and better equipped to tackle their academic challenges.

With a mission to strengthen academic outcomes and renew student motivation, this year's program was a tremendous success!



Daniel and his newly wedded wife Rita are all smiles as they exit the ACK St. Emmanuel Church shortly after being joined in holy matrimony.

Danny weds Rita

A beautiful beginning for one of our own

We are thrilled to share the joyful news that one of our senior students, Daniel, tied the knot with the love of his life, Rita, this past August!

The couple was joined in holy matrimony in a vibrant and heartwarming ceremony attended by family, friends, and members of the SAAS community. It was a day filled with love, laughter, and the celebration of a beautiful union.

Daniel, a SAAS alumnus, is a proud graduate of the Technical University of Mombasa, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer and Mathematics. His journey from student to graduate and now to husband, is a wonderful reflection of the growth and transformation we are privileged to witness in our scholars.

We extend our warmest congratulations to Daniel and Rita as they begin this exciting new chapter together. May your marriage be filled with love, mutual support, and countless blessings.

Cheers to a lifetime of happiness!

Mombasa hosts East African Ocean Festival

This October, our beautiful coast will host the second edition of the **East Africa Ocean Festival (TEAOF)**, from October 17-19, at Tudor Creek, Mombasa.

It's shaping up to be an inspiring blend of culture, conservation, marine adventure, and community celebration.

What to Expect

- Beach clean-ups & waterfront restoration
- Underwater experiences.
- Cultural Showcases
- Boat and dhow races
- Swimming competitions
- Carmel race

One of the festival's key goals is to raise awareness about protecting the marine environment, especially reducing plastic pollution, mangrove restoration, and sustainable use of waterfronts.



A team of fishermen paddle their boat in a dragon race during the first edition of the East African Ocean Festival in 2024

August Holiday Peer Talk Session

Empowering minds, shaping futures



As part of the SAAS Academic Action Plan and to complement the academic support provided during the August Holiday Tuition Program, SAAS organised a Peer Talk Session on August 18, 2025, attended by 100 students.

The session was facilitated by Mr. Sheddy, a Youth Mentor and life Coach, accompanied by Madam Lillian, a Counselor and gender Advocate.

The session was designed to:

- Complement academic support with life skills training
- Address psychosocial needs through open, relatable discussions
- Strengthen the character and resilience of our scholars
- Equip students to navigate real-world challenges confidently

The Peer Talk Session was a resounding success—students left feeling:

- More empowered and self-aware
- Better equipped to handle personal and academic pressures
- Inspired to make intentional, informed life choices
- Connected with their peers in a deeper, more respectful way

As we continue to invest in the holistic development of our students, such sessions remain a vital part of our approach to nurturing the next generation of responsible, confident, and empowered African leaders.



SAAS founding director Gina together poses for a group photo with SAAS-sponsored students at Matuga Girls High school. In the picture, she is standing alongside the school’s Chief Principal and some members of her teaching staff alongside SAAS staff in Mombasa.

Director Gina Woods Visits Kenya

Inspiring Hope. Celebrating Impact. Strengthening Commitment

We were deeply honored to welcome Gina Woods, the Founding Director of Sponsor An African Scholar (SAAS), back to Kenya in May 2025.

Her visit marked a meaningful moment of reflection, reconnection, and renewed commitment to the SAAS mission—empowering African scholars through access to quality education. From school visits and alumni catch-ups to conversations with current students and volunteer tutors, Gina’s presence was a heartfelt reminder of how far we’ve come—and the incredible potential that still lies ahead.

A Heartwarming Visit to Matuga Girls High School

One of the highlights of Gina's trip was a visit to Matuga Girls High School in Kwale County, where she met with several bright, determined girls currently sponsored through SAAS.

These young scholars shared their dreams, academic progress, and gratitude, offering a moving testament to the life-changing impact of education and opportunity. Gina left inspired by their resilience and passion, reaffirming SAAS's commitment to nurturing young women leaders.

We are also glad to report that three of our alumni are currently working at the school. **Mr. Benedict Luganje** and **Mr. Ben Mallah** (brother to Fr. Eric) serve as teachers at the institution, while **Mr. James Kirima** is the school’s Finance Officer.

These three individuals are a testament to the success stories made possible through the sponsorship they received from SAAS.

Reconnecting with Alumni: Tabitha's Inspiring Journey

Gina also had the special opportunity to reconnect with Tabitha, one of SAAS's earliest beneficiaries. Sponsored in 2013 to pursue her studies in beauty therapy, Tabitha has spent over a decade honing her craft in the beauty industry.

In 2024, she took a bold leap and opened her beauty parlour, which she now runs successfully and independently. Her journey from student to entrepreneur is a powerful story of determination, hard work, and the long-term impact of empowerment.

We are incredibly proud of Tabitha, and stories like hers remind us of the ripple effect that even a single opportunity can create.

Supporting Digital Empowerment

Gina also spent time with students in our free computer training program, encouraging them to embrace ICT as a pathway to self-reliance, innovation, and future readiness.

She was deeply impressed by their curiosity, commitment, and eagerness to learn—qualities that reflect the essence of the SAAS spirit.

No visit would be complete without recognizing the backbone of our ICT initiative—our dedicated volunteer tutors. Gina took time to personally meet and appreciate these remarkable individuals, whose commitment and expertise continue to shape the digital futures of our scholars.

Gina's time in Kenya was more than a visit—it was a celebration of impact, progress, and possibility. From classrooms to computer labs, from heartfelt conversations to shared aspirations, the visit strengthened our collective resolve to keep pushing forward.



Some of the boys making a group presentation on mental stress and depression among men during the counselling and psycho-social session at the office in Mombasa, Kenya.

Counselling and Psycho-social support session

Prioritizing emotional wellness for academic success

As part of our commitment to holistic student development, we organised a Counselling and Psychosocial Support Session on Saturday, August 9, 2025, after five intensive days of academic learning during our August holiday tuition. The session was attended by 101 students and provided a much-needed pause to focus on our scholars' emotional and psychological well-being.

With the pressures of schoolwork, exams, personal challenges, and societal expectations, our students carry more than just schoolbags. This session was carefully designed to:

- Help students manage school-related stress and academic anxiety
- Address personal and emotional issues impacting learning
- Provide a safe space for sharing and healing
- Equip students with coping tools and emotional resilience
- Reinforce that mental health is a key part of academic success

The session was a success as we observed the following.

- **Emotional Relief:** Students showed signs of emotional release and comfort through shared experiences.
- **Increased Awareness:** There was a noticeable shift in how students talked about mental health—they talked more openly and respectfully.
- **Strengthened Community:** The session enhanced trust among students and fostered a stronger sense of belonging.
- **Positive Influence on Learning:** Students returned to academic sessions with renewed focus and motivation.

The Counselling and Psychosocial Support Session was a critical and successful intervention, reminding us that academic excellence cannot be achieved without emotional well-being. Our journey with our scholars isn't just about passing exams—it's about walking alongside them through every challenge and helping them grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

We will continue integrating mental health support into all our academic programs, ensuring no student walks alone.



The May-August ICT cohort pose for a group photo with their certificates during their graduation ceremony at the office after satisfactorily completing the three-month course.

Graduation of our May-August ICT cohort

Empowering youth through digital skills since 2010

We are proud to announce the successful graduation ceremony of our May–August 2025 ICT Cohort, marking yet another milestone in our mission to equip young Africans with relevant, future-ready skills.

After three months of rigorous training, 32 students were awarded certificates—ready to step confidently into Information and Communication Technology, empowered with knowledge, skills, and purpose.

The ICT program remains a cornerstone of our commitment to youth empowerment through education and technology. With the world increasingly leaning on digital innovation, we are proud to produce graduates who are:

- Technically skilled
- Digitally literate
- Professionally prepared
- Socially responsible and community-minded

We extend heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated volunteer tutors, Morris and Wellington, whose passion and commitment have been instrumental in driving this program forward. Their selfless service, mentorship, and hands-on teaching continue to shape the next generation of African tech leaders.

Since its humble beginnings in 2010, our ICT training initiative has grown in scale and impact. Now in its 15th year, the program has graduated over 2,000 students, fostered employability and entrepreneurship, and created a vibrant community of tech-savvy alumni.

As we celebrate this achievement, we remain committed to expanding access to quality, practical ICT training for even more students. Our graduates are not just walking away with certificates, they're stepping into a future filled with opportunity, innovation, and hope.

Congratulations to the Class of May–August 2025!

Your journey is just beginning, and we can't wait to see the impact you'll make.

Director Gina’s visit to Kenya



- 1. Sylvia, Maria & Gina take a walk within the streets of Shauri Yako Village in Mombasa, Kenya.
- 2. Gina attends mass at Kongowea Catholic church
- 3. Gina visits Tabitha's beauty salon
- 4. Gina engages computer students
- 5. Gina gifts Joseph and MJ soccer boots
- 6. Mr. James (Finance Officer) and Mr. Ben Mallah (teacher) lead Gina to Matuga Girls High School reception area after receiving her during her visit to the school. The two are SAAS alumnus
- 7. Sylvia, Gina, Tabitha and Maria pose for a photo outside the salon



1. Students engage in a group discussion to answer an equation
2. A teacher takes the students through a lesson
3. A student enjoys her chicken biriani during a Peer Talk session
4. Teacher Ben taking the students through a History class. Ben is one of our senior pioneer students, now teaching in a national school (Matuga Girls High School).



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EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

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