# CONSAMS 2025 Conference in Mombasa, Kenya




*CONSAMS conference 2025, Kenyote address by Prof. Hansen*

The Consortium of New sub-Sahara, African Medical Schools (CONSAMS) founded in 2011 held its 12th annual conference at the Technical University of Mombasa (TUM), Kenya, in early September 2025. It was a special moment for TUM, an institution found in 1948 as it had just started a medical school that opened its doors to new students on exactly the same day that the CONSAMS conference commenced on 1 September 2025. It was stirring for CONSAMS members to arrive on the opening day at the TUM campus with its majestic and historical architecture and to see a large banner with CONSAMS name and logo prominently draped over the entrance archway. TUM, as a new African medical school was joining CONSAMS and already hosting its annual meeting!

CONSAMS was founded to cater to the needs, challenges and opportunities of new African medical schools (of which there are now over 130 at various stages of development). CONSAMS initially served the needs of just five southern African medical schools and was at the time called the Consortium of New Southern African Medical Schools.1,2,3,4 It soon became apparent that many other new medical schools were opening on the African continent so the decision was taken around 2017 to expand CONSAMS into a sub-Sahara African consortium. The consortium started meeting each year (and sometimes twice a year) at different African medical schools across the African continent. On site meetings were suspended during the Covid pandemic but online meetings continued. Within renewed sponsorship, on site meetings started again last year with an extremely successful meeting at the University of Namibia, School of Medicine.

A total of 31 academic leaders and 11 students from 15 countries met between 1st – 3rd September 2025 at TUM in Mombasa. The central theme of the three-day event was "Transforming Health Futures: Integrating Training, Technology and Planetary Well Being" focused on a definitive shift from traditional medical curricula toward a holistic, systems-based approach that highlighted the (1) interconnectedness of human health and environment; (2) environmental sustainability; and (3) technological innovation. By integrating these three themes, the conference aimed to redefine the mission of new medical schools, positioning them as agents of change capable of preparing future medical professionals for complex 21st-century health challenges. These themes of the conference were further integrated through an inspiring keynote session titled "Medical schools and socially responsible curricula" by Dr. Anthea Hansen from Stellenbosch University in South Africa, The talk explored with great nuance how and why medical curricula at African medical schools should be contextually situated and relevant rather than just replicas of the Western cannon of medicine.

The evening before the start of the conference, a networking reception was hosted that included a welcoming address by the university chancellor, followed by a talk on the history of CONSAMS from its inception in 2011 to its present-day configuration as a pan African organization.



*CONSAMS 2025, conference workshop*

The conference was structured around the sharing of ideas, programs and curricula; the fostering collaborative exchanges; and potential research projects. A panel of experts explored specific research topics for new African medical schools that would be considered by the Research and Education Committee. A 'World Café' session explored a range of delegates' perceptions regarding assessment practices, professional development of students, curriculum development and integration, as well as other topics in medical education.

The programme also included a student-based research session. Eleven students showcased their research on themes such as "Innovations in Content Delivery: Rethinking How We Teach and Learn; Medical Innovations in Training: Shaping the Future of Healthcare Education; One Health Many Frontiers: Preparing Professionals for a Changing World; and The Role of Medical Schools in Advancing One Health and Addressing Climate Change". The CONSAMS 2025 conference charted a clear course for how new African medical schools can leverage holistic training and technology to secure a resilient and equitable health future for all of Africa.

A major function of CONSAMS conferences has been to allow ample time for delegates to network through receptions and dinner functions. Given that many faculty are new to their institutions and to CONSAMS, delegates need time to get to know one another in person to more effectively facilitate sharing of knowledge and programs, and to promote exchanges of faculty and students. Networking has been a major strength of CONSAMS from its early days when it was comprised of only 5 medical schools in southern Africa. On the last evening of the conference, a most memorable networking dinner was hosted by TUM on a traditional dhow boat afloat on the Mombasa creek.

Proceedings closed with the election of Prof. Peter Gichangi (TUM, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic, Research & Extension) as CONSAMS new president and the election of its new Executive Committee. Prof. Gichangi succeeds Dr. Felicia Christians (UNAM, School of Medicine, Namibia). Feedback from the conference was universally excellent and delegates returned home energized and prepared to go forward during the year with virtual meetings that included the newly formed Research and Education subcommittees.

The next two CONSAMS conferences have been slated to be held in Botswana (2026, University of Botswana, Gaborone) and Nigeria (2027, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State). New African medical schools (or individuals at such schools) interested in participating in CONSAMS should view the website: www.CONSAMS.net.

## References


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4. Eichbaum, Quentin, Kasonde Bowa, Paolo Pires, Olli Vanio, and Peter Nyarango. 2014. "Challenges and opportunities for new medical schools in Africa: the Consortium of New Southern African Medical Schools (CONSAMS)." Academic Medicine 89 (8):S108-S109.