

The BMA Newsletter

World Class Centre for Maritime Education and Training



BMA Cadets return from International Sea-Time Training, strengthening Kenya's Maritime talent pipeline.

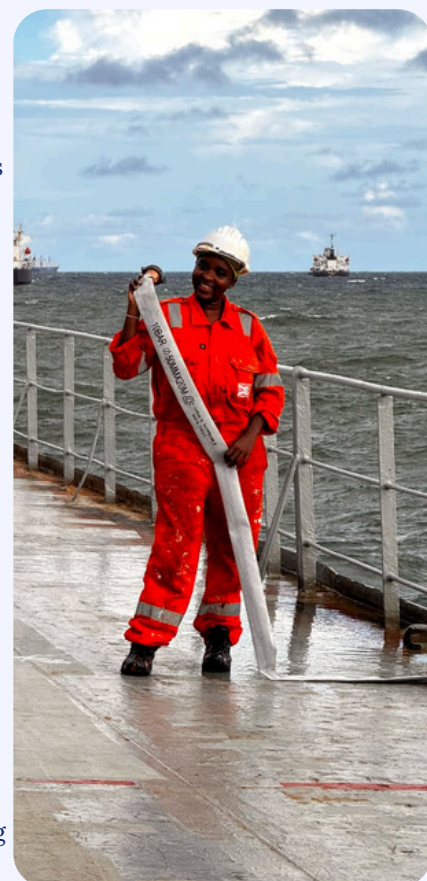
By John Ndegwa

After seven months at sea navigating some of the world's busiest shipping routes, learning under demanding conditions, and adapting to the disciplined life aboard a modern commercial vessel, two young maritime professionals have returned home with more than just certificates – they have returned with experience, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Bandari Maritime Academy (BMA) early this year officially welcomed back Engine Cadet Michael Nzioka and Deck Cadet Brown Ondego, whose successful completion of intensive international sea-time training aboard the CMA CGM NILE marks a significant milestone in their professional journey and in the Academy's mission to nurture globally competitive maritime talent.

The cadets were formally received at the Academy by the Deputy Director, Maritime Education and Training, Chief Engineer Titus Kilonzi, who conveyed warm congratulations on behalf of the BMA Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Eric Katana.

Chief Eng. Kilonzi commended the cadets for their dedication, resilience, and professionalism, emphasizing that international sea-time placement remains a core pillar of BMA's training framework and a vital component in producing competent, safety-driven maritime officers.



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NEWSFOCUS



Engine Cadet Michael Nzioka and Deck Cadet Brown Ondego during their onboard training.



Engine Cadet Michael Nzioka onboard CMA CGM NILE

"Our partnership with leading global shipping lines such as CMA CGM ensures that our cadets are exposed to world-class operational standards and international maritime best practices," he noted.

During their time onboard CMA CGM NILE, the cadets were immersed in full-scale ship operations, navigating the demands of modern commercial shipping while adhering to strict international safety and performance standards.

Reflecting on his experience, Deck Cadet Brown Ondego highlighted the broad scope of professional skills acquired throughout the training period.

For Engine Cadet Michael Nzioka, the journey proved equally transformative, shaping both his technical competence and professional mindset.



Deck Cadet Brown Ondego display a CMA CGM flag while onboard CMA CGM NILE.

"During my sea-time training onboard CMA CGM NILE, I successfully completed my cadetship program under CMA CGM sponsorship, acquiring advanced skills in the role of a senior engine cadet. My experience was defined by a 'Safety First' mindset, where technical competence and proactive risk management are inseparable," Nzioka stated.

The successful completion of this sea-time training underscores BMA's growing reputation as a regional hub for maritime excellence, producing graduates who are not only academically qualified but operationally prepared to serve in the demanding global maritime industry.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Where Discipline Meets the Horizon, Excellence Becomes the Standard."

—

Senior Career Services Officer, Samuel Dube



The Choice and the Vision

Mwinyimkuu Kai, Marine Engineering student.

I am a Marine Engineering student driven by purpose and clarity. My decision to pursue this field was not accidental, it was deliberate and strategic. While many people look at the ocean and see mystery or adventure, I see innovation, responsibility and opportunity. I chose to study at Bandari Maritime Academy because I understood that mastering the world's most powerful marine engines requires learning at the heart of the maritime industry.

Growing up near the water, I often watched massive ships glide across the horizon, true floating cities powered by engineering excellence. I realized that behind every moving vessel is a skilled team ensuring that complex machinery runs flawlessly. Seeing individuals from my own community succeed in this global, high-tech industry strengthened my belief that I belonged there too. My mechanical mindset, curiosity and determination naturally aligned with the demands of the engine room.

Throughout my training, I have gained more than technical knowledge. I have developed discipline, resilience, and composure under pressure, qualities essential for life at sea. Marine engineering demands precision, teamwork, and mental strength. Each lesson and practical session sharpen my ability to manage complex systems responsibly and efficiently.

My immediate goal is to complete my studies and obtain the mandatory STCW certifications, opening doors to international opportunities. Ultimately, I aspire to rise through the ranks and become a Chief Engineer, leading the department that powers global trade and maritime excellence.

“To my fellow youth watching from the shore, do not remain spectators. The maritime world rewards courage, skill, and hard work. Step forward, embrace the challenge and power your own future” Mwinyimkuu

My Journey in Transport and Logistics

Maureen Wanjiru Munge, Transport and Logistics student.



My choice was intentional, inspired by the complexity and coordination behind supply chains that connect continents and keep industries running. I have always viewed logistics as the silent engine of global trade, where precision and strategy determine success.

My experience at the academy has been transformative. The combination of academic rigor and practical maritime exposure has strengthened my discipline, professionalism, and understanding of real-world operations. Learning in an environment closely linked to the maritime industry has broadened my perspective and refined my career goals.

Looking ahead, I aspire to become a strategic leader in logistics, contributing to innovative and efficient systems that enhance trade and connectivity. I am determined to master operational optimization and lead impactful projects that streamline supply chains and drive sustainable progress in the industry.



Karen Kadzo, Marine Engineering student.

My passion for the sea and fascination with ship machinery inspired me to pursue this challenging and rewarding career path. Growing up along the coast, I developed a deep admiration for ships and the powerful systems that keep them operating.

I knew I wanted a profession that would push me beyond limits and allow me to apply my technical skills in a practical environment.

At Bandari Maritime Academy, I have gained both solid theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience in marine systems, safety procedures, and equipment maintenance. The training has strengthened my technical competence and professional discipline.

As a woman in a traditionally male dominated field, I remain resilient, focused and committed to excellence. I am determined to prove that ability is defined by skill and dedication not gender. In the future, I look forward to contributing meaningfully to the maritime industry.

“To every young woman with a dream, step forward boldly, your strength, intelligence, and determination are more powerful than any barrier,” Kadzo.

A beacon of determination for Kenya’s young women Cadets.

Winnie Nyambu, Deck Cadet.

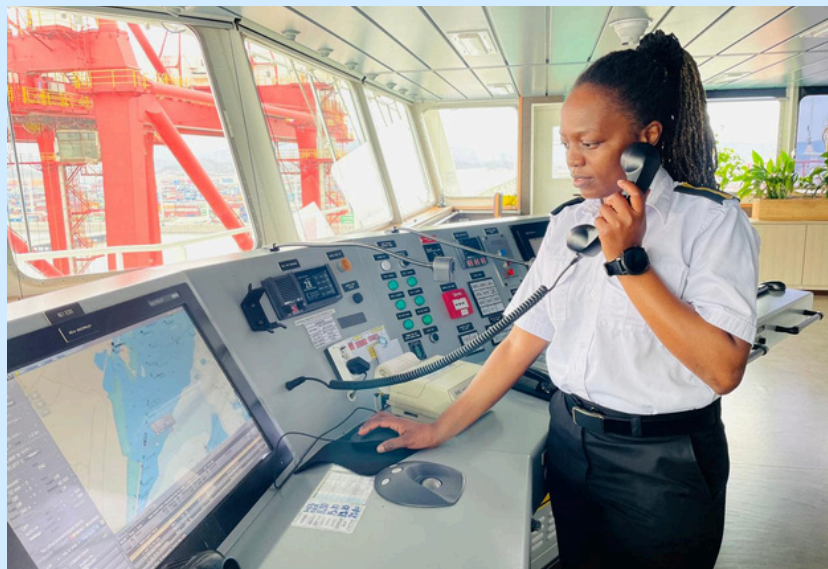
In an industry traditionally dominated by men, Winnie Nyambu is steadily charting a course that inspires a new generation of Kenyan women to dream boldly and pursue careers at sea.

Winnie, a Cadet at Bandari Maritime Academy (BMA), is currently undertaking her mandatory sea time training onboard a CMA CGM vessel. This critical phase marks the final stretch of her 12-month sea time requirement, a key milestone in her professional journey toward acquiring a Certificate of Competency (CoC) upon successful completion.

Her presence onboard a global shipping line vessel speaks volumes about her determination and courage. Balancing the demands of life at sea with professional growth, Winnie exemplifies resilience, discipline, and commitment—qualities essential in maritime operations.

As a seafarer in training, Winnie’s journey carries a powerful message for young women cadets across Kenya, that gender is no barrier to excellence in the maritime sector. Her progress underscores the growing opportunities for women in nautical professions and highlights the importance of persistence and hard work.

Winnie Nyambu’s story is not just about completing sea time; it is about breaking barriers, setting standards, and inspiring confidence among aspiring female mariners. She stands as a role model of what is possible when determination meets opportunity.



How Kenyan Cadets are breaking the 'sea-time' barrier

By John Ndegwa



For Hassan Ali Mwamaingu, a Deck cadet at Bandari Maritime Academy (BMA), and nine of his fellow cadets, the long-awaited horizon has finally opened. What once felt distant and uncertain is now within reach.

As they stood before a gathering of maritime officials, the ten cadets were officially flagged off to join international shipping lines. For Mwamaingu, the moment was more than a ceremony, it was the end of years of waiting, perseverance, and unwavering hope.

"Sea-time has been a major challenge," he said, describing the move as a noble step for his career.

The milestone follows a concerted push by the Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs. Backed by Cabinet Secretary Hassan Joho, the government is on a mission to solve what BMA Chief Executive Officer Dr. Eric Katana describes as "perennial puzzle,"-the mandatory sea-time experience required for cadets to translate their classroom knowledge into professional licenses.

The maritime industry operates under strict international laws. A cadet's education is effectively stuck in limbo until they complete mandatory training hours on an accredited vessel.

Currently, BMA records show roughly 120 cadets are due for the slots. To manage the backlog, the academy is using an aging analysis, prioritizing those who have been on the waiting list for the last five to six years.

To clear the backlog, BMA is aggressive about international partnerships. While 10 cadets were flagged off to start their sea time training, 43 are already at sea, and seven have recently returned from their tours. Much of this progress stems from a partnership with Danica, a Hamburg-based crewing agency.

"A candidate must have completed all studies and cleared their fees to be entered into the alumni database. Beyond the books, the academy looks for high levels of discipline and leadership skills displayed during their training," Dr Katana explains.

Henrik Jensen, CEO of Danica, noted that the shortage of officer training slots is a "strange problem" because the world is actually facing a shortage of officers.

He noted the issue has nothing to do with the quality of Kenyan cadets, noting that similar struggles exist in Europe, the Philippines, and India. Jensen predicted that as world trade grows, one of the cadets present would eventually become the first Kenyan captain on a foreign ship.

Beyond Danica, the government is actively signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). Following recent deals with Saudi Arabia and the Dominican Republic, a major agreement with Singapore—one of the world's premier maritime hubs—is expected within the next two weeks.



The timing is critical. As the global maritime workforce ages, particularly in countries like South Korea, the industry is looking toward Africa to fill the gap. Dr. Katana noted that the academy is working to ensure Kenyan youth get the mandatory sea-time so they can qualify as officers, ratings, and pilots.

BMA Senior Deputy Director of Corporate Services, Evans Oyeiyo, emphasized that the academy's management is united in this mission.

"As directors of various departments, we are fully behind Dr. Katana's leadership, with the goal of tackling the challenge head-on until every student has received their opportunity," Oyeiyo said.



Bandari Maritime Academy Cadets shine on the global Seas.

By John Ndegwa

Bandari Maritime Academy (BMA) continues to cement its reputation as a leading maritime training institution whose graduates are highly sought after across global shipping lines, following the successful completion of mandatory sea-time training by three of its cadets.

BMA Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Eric Katana officially welcomed the cadets back to the academy after they each completed the rigorous 12-month onboard sea-time training—a critical milestone toward professional certification in the international maritime industry.

The returning cadets—Engine Cadet Grace Mbeyu Chidzao, who trained onboard MV Belmonte; Deck Cadet Juliet Tatu Karisa, who served aboard MV Courageous; and Engine Cadet Stephen Ngao Ngoro, who completed his sea time onboard MV Caro—represent the growing success of BMA’s competency-based training model that blends academic excellence with real-world maritime exposure.

Their successful deployment and completion of sea time on internationally operating vessels underscore the high employability of BMA cadets, who continue to secure placements with reputable shipping lines across the globe. This achievement reflects the academy’s strong industry linkages and its alignment with international maritime standards under the STCW Convention.

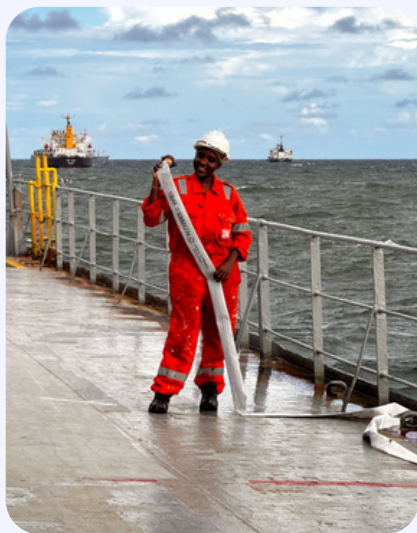
Speaking during the reception, Engine Cadet Grace Mbeyu Chidzao described her sea-time experience as both demanding and transformative. She noted that the training immersed her in real shipboard operations, including watchkeeping, teamwork, and strict adherence to international safety protocols. “The experience strengthened my confidence and sharpened my practical skills, preparing me to competently serve in the engine department on any vessel worldwide,” she said.



Deck Cadet Juliet Tatu Karisa highlighted the extensive hands-on exposure she gained in navigation, cargo handling, and bridge management under the mentorship of seasoned officers. She emphasized that the training sharpened her decision-making and problem-solving abilities, equipping her for the realities of life at sea and future leadership roles onboard ships.

On his part, Engine Cadet Stephen Ngao Ngoro credited the training with enhancing his technical proficiency in machinery operations, engine maintenance, and safety procedures within the engine room. He noted that the onboard experience provided practical knowledge that seamlessly complements classroom instruction, making him industry-ready in a highly competitive global market.

Dr. Katana congratulated the cadets on their achievement, noting that their success reflects BMA’s commitment to producing competent, disciplined, and globally competitive maritime professionals. He reaffirmed the academy’s mission to prepare cadets not only for certification, but for meaningful careers aboard vessels operating in international waters.



Sailing toward sustainability: Bandari Maritime Academy pioneers green hydrogen training in maritime education

By John Ndegwa

On the shores of the Indian Ocean, where ships dock and depart carrying the lifeblood of global trade, a quiet revolution is taking shape in the classrooms of Bandari Maritime Academy (BMA).

As the world grapples with the escalating realities of climate change, the maritime industry, long considered one of the hardest sectors to decarbonize is under mounting pressure to rethink its future. At BMA, that future is already being written in green.

The Academy has launched a pioneering Green Hydrogen (GH₂) Course, a pilot programme implemented in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). More than just a new addition to the curriculum, the course represents a bold shift toward sustainable maritime education in East Africa.

Global shipping accounts for a significant share of greenhouse gas emissions, prompting urgent calls for cleaner fuels and smarter port operations. Green hydrogen produced using renewable energy has emerged as a promising alternative fuel capable of dramatically reducing emissions from vessels and port facilities.

Recognizing this global transition, BMA's leadership has moved swiftly to align training with emerging industry needs. Under the stewardship of CEO Dr. Eric Katana, the Academy is embedding green hydrogen technologies into its academic framework, ensuring that cadets graduate with skills tailored for the future of shipping.



During the launch, Principal Curriculum Development Officer Silas Khasindu underscored the transformative potential of the programme. He emphasized that the course positions BMA at the forefront of green maritime training in the region, equipping cadets with competencies in alternative clean energy solutions, green port management, and the safe handling of vessels powered by emerging fuels.

“This programme empowers our cadets to actively contribute to the decarbonization of the maritime shipping sector,” Khasindu noted.

“The pilot programme targets our Level 6 Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) students and is carefully aligned with both national training standards and international environmental frameworks, reinforcing Kenya’s commitment to environmentally responsible maritime operations,” said Assistant Director of Quality Assurance, Michael Njogah.



My Journey Aboard MV UAFL Dubai



Hassan Ali Mwamaingu – Deck Cadet.

One of the most defining chapters of my nautical science journey began the day I stepped aboard MV UAFL Dubai as a Deck Cadet. From that first moment on deck, I understood that life at sea demands more than knowledge—it demands discipline, resilience, and an unrelenting willingness to learn.

The vessel was not just my workplace; it became my floating classroom, shaping me into a more confident and capable seafarer with every watch and operation.

Onboard, I gained lessons no textbook could fully capture. Through mooring operations, cargo handling, and navigational watchkeeping, I experienced the true meaning of teamwork and accountability. Under the mentorship of experienced officers, I deepened my understanding of bridge procedures, COLREGS application, passage planning, and safety management systems.

Each responsibility, whether great or small, strengthened my attention to detail and sense of duty. I came to appreciate that discipline and respect for authority are the backbone of a vessel's safety and efficiency.

The challenges at sea—long hours, changing climates, and high expectations—tested and refined my character. They taught me humility and the importance of continuous improvement. Every sunrise over the horizon reminded me to strive to be better than I was the day before.



As a proud cadet of Bandari Maritime Academy, I encourage my fellow cadets to remain disciplined and dedicated. Success at sea begins in the classroom. My goal is to grow into a competent Officer of the Watch and, one day, achieve my ultimate ambition of becoming a Master Mariner. The voyage is long, but with determination and discipline, I am confident I will reach that shore.



"Sailors, with their built-in sense of order, service and discipline, should really be running the world." — Nicholas Monsarrat

Advancing port efficiency through gantry crane cargo simulator training.

By John Ndegwa

Twenty-one employees from the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) have successfully completed an intensive three-month Gantry Crane Cargo Simulator course at Bandari Maritime Academy (BMA), in a strategic move aimed at strengthening operational efficiency, safety, and productivity at the ports of Port of Mombasa and Port of Lamu.

The specialized training programme leverages advanced cargo simulation technology to replicate real-life port environments, allowing participants to sharpen their technical skills without disrupting live port operations. Through carefully designed modules, trainees are gaining practical experience in crane handling, container movement precision, safety protocols, and emergency response procedures.

As global trade volumes continue to grow, modern ports are increasingly relying on skilled operators capable of handling sophisticated equipment with speed and accuracy. The simulator-based approach not only minimizes operational risks but also builds operator confidence before deployment to active terminals.



BMA Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Eric Katana, commended the partnership, noting that the Academy remains committed to delivering industry-responsive training aligned with international maritime best practices. He emphasized that simulation technology is transforming maritime training by bridging the gap between theory and real-world operations.

The programme was overseen by the Deputy Director, Maritime Transport Operations and Training (MTOT), Enock Okemwa, who ensured that the curriculum met both industry standards and KPA's operational requirements. Supporting the delivery was Port Equipment Trainer Loth Komora, whose technical expertise and hands-on mentorship played a critical role in equipping participants with practical competencies.

KPA Assistant Human Resource Officer – Operations, Miriam Obwong, highlighted the Authority's continued investment in staff development as a key driver of improved port performance and service delivery.



Message from Senior Deputy Director, Maritime Transport and Port Operations Training

Bandari Maritime Academy remains committed to developing competent, disciplined, and globally competitive maritime professionals. As students, you are at the heart of this mission, your dedication to training, professionalism, and continuous learning will shape the future of Kenya's maritime industry. Maritime Education and Training and Logistics are two fields that are vital to national development, global trade, and international cooperation. You have chosen disciplines that demand professionalism, discipline, resilience.

The maritime and logistics sectors are the backbone of the global economy. Over 80 percent of world trade by volume is carried by sea, supported by complex logistics networks that ensure efficiency, safety, and sustainability. As students in these fields, you are being prepared not only for careers, but for leadership roles in industries that connect nations, support economic growth, and ensure the smooth movement of goods and services across borders. - SDD MTOT Enock Okemwa.



PICTORIAL PAGE

MARITIME ACADEMY



Students from the Guard of Honour team at Bandari Maritime Academy proudly showcase their newly acquired uniforms, reflecting discipline, unity, and renewed spirit.



Students from Bandari Maritime Academy during their participation in the National Youth Town Hall and Youth Networking Day under the Youth Social and Economic Empowerment (YSEE) Project, held at IOME 001, Kizingo. The forum offered a dynamic platform for dialogue on youth empowerment, innovation, entrepreneurship, and meaningful policy engagement.



Marine Engineering students at Bandari Maritime Academy during the launch of the Green Hydrogen (GH₂) Course a pioneering pilot program delivered in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit to advance sustainable maritime innovation and clean energy skills.



Bandari Maritime Academy CEO Dr. Eric Katana (second right) with Media Council of Kenya CEO David Omwoyo (second left) during a courtesy call at the Academy on 5th February 2026. Also present are BMA Deputy Director, Corporate Services, Evans Oyieyo, and MCK Coast Regional Coordinator, Maureen Mudi.



Hon. Suleiman Shahbal, Member of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and renowned businessman, inspects the Guard of Honour during his visit to the Academy on 10th February 2026.

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