

Scholars Program In Brief:

- The Scholars Program is a highly-selective, 18-month gap year program focused primarily on **peace-building** and **educational access**
- Based in Bujumbura, **Burundi**
- To date has worked with 68 Burundian students
- Current cohort is the Tujenge Scholars Class of 2020
- Member of **HALI Access Network** (www.haliaccess.org) and **International ACAC**
- All courses are **taught in English**
- Within the Burundian context, students come from diverse low-income backgrounds
- Courses are largely seminar-based and emphasize critical thinking and university-level coursework
- Teaching staff hold degrees from Harvard University, **University of Buea**, **University of Southern California**, and **Yale University** (*bold for MA/PhD*)

Tujenge Scholars Cohort 3 Facts:

- 26 scholars selected from an applicant pool of 225
- Scholars are split 50%-50% female-male
- Scholars come from 10 of Burundi's 18 Provinces
- All scholars are Burundian and studied in the Burundian national education system
- The average score for scholars on the Burundian national exit exam was in the 99th percentile
- The median graduating class rank of scholars is 1
- Scholars' median annual family income is \$2,600
- 35% earn below \$1.90 per day
- Scholars started studies in January 2019 and will graduate in June 2020

Foundation Background:

Tujenge Africa Foundation launched in 2015 from the belief that access to quality education—grounded in peace-building, inter-ethnic reconciliation, and civic leadership—could single-handedly change the trajectory of post-conflict states in Africa. Founded by visionaries Wendell Adjetey and Etienne Mashuli, two men who made the improbable journey from civil war, genocide, military dictatorships and abject poverty in sub-Saharan Africa to Ivy League degree programs, Tujenge Africa Foundation is expanding the opportunities for academically gifted and disadvantaged youth.

The Foundation currently operates in Burundi, where a history of civil war, genocide, bloodshed, and international neglect has hindered economic growth, ultimately driving its status as the poorest country in the world.

In addition to its flagship Tujenge Scholars Program, Tujenge initiatives include a primary school assistance fund for the highly-marginalized Batwa group, and still-nascent innovation lab and research institute projects.

Academic Program:

The Scholars Program curriculum is designed to balance five different academic objectives (in order of priority):

- Peacebuilding through dialogue
- Redefining ethical leadership
- Establishing English proficiency
- University preparation and critical thinking skills
- University access

The 18-month curriculum is split into four terms:

Term 1: Foundation (16 weeks)

English literacy with a focus on reading skills
Math fundamentals (Algebra through pre-Calculus)
Computer literacy and typing skills
Seminar: Introduction to African Literature

Term 2: Exploration (10 weeks)

English literacy with a focus on writing skills
Fundamentals of Scientific Inquiry: Human Evolutionary History
Seminar: Burundi in the World
†Seminar: Introduction to the Liberal Arts
†Seminar: Peacebuilding in the Great Lakes Region
Standardized test preparation

Term 3: Investigation (16 weeks)

English literacy
Lab-based inquiry: Climate, Environment, and Human Societies
Seminar: Activism and Moral Action
Test preparation and university applications

Term 4: Preparation (16 weeks)

English literacy: Reading and Writing for College
Calculus I: Differential Calculus
Seminar: Burundi in the World
State of the Art: Survey of Modern Scientific Inquiry
†Social Science Elective(s): TBD
Leadership service project
University transition coaching

†Class taught by visiting university instructor

University Admission Statistics from Cohorts 1 & 2:

- 20 Scholars in Cohort 1 & 22 Scholars in Cohort 2
- 100% have gone on to pursue undergraduate studies
- 27 scholars are studying abroad in 11 countries
- Over \$3.2M in university grants accepted
- 10 Mastercard Foundation Scholars
- Median SAT (Cohort 2): 1270 / 550 EBRW / 700 Math
Median TOEFL (Cohort 2): 21 R / 20 L / 22 W
(5 did not take SAT; 3 did not take TOEFL)

University Admissions from Cohorts 1 & 2:

Burundi

- *Bujumbura International University
- *International Leadership University
- *Université du Burundi
- *Université du Lac Tanganyika
- *Université Lumière
- *University of Equator

Canada

- *Quest University

China

- Nanjing University

France

- *Sciences Po
- *Sorbonne Université
- *Université d'Angers
- *Université de Limoges
- Université de Nantes
- *Université de Poitiers
- *Université François-Rabelais

Ghana

- *Ashesi University
- *Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

India

- *Ashoka University

Kenya

- *Catholic University of Eastern Africa
- *Strathmore University
- *United States International University
- *Tujenge scholar has matriculated here

Lebanon

- *American University of Beirut

Mauritius

- *Université des Mascareignes

Russia

- *Samara University

Rwanda

- *Kepler University
- *University of Rwanda

Turkey

- Abdullah Gul University

United States

- *Agnes Scott University
- Biola University
- *Brown University
- Canisius College
- *Carleton College
- *Cornell University
- Duke University
- *Harvard University
- Hult International Business School
- Marist College
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Montana State University
- *Northwestern University
- *North Central College
- Seattle Pacific University
- Spelman College
- *Vanderbilt University
- Washington and Lee University
- *Wesleyan University

Zimbabwe

- *Africa University

Country and School Context:

- **Primary & secondary school is conducted in French.**
- Primary: 6 yrs; lower secondary: 4 yrs; upper secondary: 3 yrs
- English is taught as a foreign language in secondary school by largely unqualified teachers.
- Primary school completion rate is 60% of population; secondary completion is 30%; just **5% start university.**
- “Official” exchange rates for Burundi’s currency significantly over-represent purchasing power. As of 10/1/19, the “real” rate was approx. BIF 3,000 to \$1.00.

Grades and Test Results in Burundi:

School Grades

- Students are graded on a year-by-year percentage-based system; no multi-year GPA is calculated.
- Equivalent grades in Burundi are much lower than in the US; the 2018 median grade was **approx. 56%**.
- Middle 50% in 2018 was approx. 52%-61%.
- Anything less than 55% is considered failing and requires repetition of an exam or the entire grade; typical class repetition rates are between 5% and 10%.
- Scores higher than 70% are considered stellar.
- Scores between different specialization tracks should be considered equivalent.

Class Rank

- Class rank is assigned within each specialization track, with somewhere between 10 and 50 students per track per school.
- A select number of schools in Burundi (both public and private) function as “elite institutions” with admission based on test results. In these cases, class rank may not be a useful metric.

National Exam

- A state-administered exam, tailored to each specialization track, is taken by all graduating students following completion of their final year of secondary school.
- Scores higher than 50% are considered “passing” and qualify a student to study at national universities.

2018 National Exam Statistics:

EXAM SCORE	PERCENTILE			
	Economics	Letters	Science A	Science B
50%	35.2%	79.6%	18.7%	65.7%
55%	49.8%	89.2%	25.8%	75.2%
60%	64.8%	94.7%	46.4%	82.9%
65%	79.6%	97.8%	54.4%	89.2%
70%	89.8%	99.2%	71.4%	94.1%
75%	95.8%	99.7%	84.8%	97.2%
80%	97.7%	99.9%	92.8%	98.7%
85%	98.9%		99.1%	99.6%
90%	99.8%			99.9%

More in-depth information about the Burundian school system and educational context can be found in the HALI Access Network Country Profile for Burundi (haliaccess.org/country-profiles/).

Admission Process for Scholars Program:

- Selection is holistic. Criteria: academic excellence, leadership and community engagement, innovation, creativity, vision, tenacity, grit, English proficiency.
- Scholars are selected to create a diverse microcosm of Burundian society in the classroom.
- Initial written application includes biographical info, high school transcripts, national exam results, 3 essays in English, and a letter of recommendation.
- 50 finalists are selected for a 3-day event that includes 15-minute interviews with a faculty panel, an English and math exam, and a dinner event.

