

Tanbur African Aid Society

www.tanburafrican.org

*Reaching out to the people of Tanzania
and Burundi in a spirit of mutual trust*



TAAS

Mission Statement: To provide professional and financial resources to empower teachers to prepare students in Tanzania and Burundi to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Tanbur African Aid Society

4th Annual Newsletter

April, 2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS for 2026

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Tanbur African Aid Society (TAAS), established in 2007, is a charitable, not for profit organization committed to help improve the quality of life of the people in Tanzania and Burundi. Many people are unable to provide their children with basic necessities, including education, which is taken for granted in the western world. Our projects include:

- Recruiting volunteer teachers from Canada to mentor teachers in Burundi in the Canadian curriculum,
- Raising funds to support Burundi English School.

Please check our website www.tanburaf african.org for more information or to make a doantion.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE March, 2026

Happy New Year to all those who have assisted TAAS in achieving their goals. We are anticipating another stellar year as we move forward in the education of our youth at Burundi English School. Proceeds from fundraising events in 2025 have allowed us to contribute to the building of more classrooms, purchase much needed technology for BES and support our Bursary students. We are thankful for the hardworking, dedicated members of TAAS and their families and friends for their generous donations of cash and volunteer time. The Casino in May and Pub night in October were very successful.

Global networking continues as our volunteers deliver quality learning experiences at the school. Textbooks have been delivered, laptops upgraded, technology improved and teacher mentoring and workshops were included in the 2025 assignments at BES. We are excited about the 2026 applicants who will be visiting Burundi this year to continue with our ambitious agenda. Principal Claudine continues in her leadership role with confidence and is receptive to initiatives which will improve the school. Congratulations to Burundi English School on attaining status as a Pearson international Center in 2025. This is indeed another step forward in dealing with the challenges of the 21st Century. Our students will be better equipped in world awareness, decision-making, self- expression, and academic performance.

Congratulations to the Grade 13 students who graduated in June 2025. Two of our Bursary students have enrolled in university this year. This reflects the excellence of TAAS objectives. These students will work hard to give back to their community. What better reward can we ask for?

Once again, thanks to Bursary sponsors, the members of TAAS, families, friends and businesses who have assisted us in meeting our lofty but reachable goals.

Gloria Gogowich

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The TAAS Annual General Meeting for the 2025 year was held on March 18, 2026. The newly elected slate of officers appears on the front page.

BES PROJECT COMMITTEE REPORT

*Carol Bahry, Gloria Gogowich, Marion Hrynew,
Dianne Eustace*

BES Project Report for 2025 AGM

1. **Volunteers** to Burundi English School:

- a) Patricia – January and February, working with technology.
- b) Tania- August to November, working with Biology and Chemistry.
- c) Brenda- September to November- working with Grade 2 and Kindergarten.

2. RACHEL program



Eric is working with Grade 9 students, using RACHEL and Fantastic Phonics



Gr. 12 students working with RACHEL in the Science lab, studying Chemistry.

3. Pearson Certification

BES received an approval letter and a certificate in June, stating that it is fully accredited by Pearson. Teachers are now able to participate in subject workshops led by Pearson specialists. BES is now responsible for informing parents about the programs and collecting payments for mock exams and final exams as well as organizing these exams.

4. Enrolment for September, 2025

PS=6	Grade 6=29
K1=12	Grade 7=37
K2=19	Grade 8A=30
K3=27	Grade 8B=24
Grade 1=25	Grade 9=40
Grade 2=26	Grade 10=38
Grade 3=33	Grade 11=28
Grade 4=29	Grade 12=13
Grade 5=34	Grade 13=16

Kindergarten and play school=64, Primary =176,
Secondary=226 students Total = **466** students

5. New volunteer home.

It is located in a good neighborhood, a 20 - minute walk from BES. The volunteers view this residence very favorably and they very much enjoy Hillaire's cooking!



6. Selection of new bursary students.

Principal Claudine as well as the September volunteers interviewed students and their families and selected three new bursary students:

Yaelle – Gr. 1



Clementine – Gr.1



Tamam – Gr.2



TAAS is supporting Clementine as a bursary student. The cost for tuition, uniform, lunches, books, and supplies is \$1,000.00 US per year.

7. Sponsors supporting their students to attend university.

- a) St. Maria Goretti School is supporting Elysees who is enrolled in Pharmacy at the Olivia University.
- b) The Morrison family is supporting Joshua for Computer Science at the Olivia University.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

by Marion Hrynew, Barb Olynyk

2025 - The volunteers at the TAAS/BES booth during the Teachers' Convention enlightened and encouraged teachers to participate in a "Burundi Bucket List Adventure." Thanks to all the volunteers who managed the booth and provided information to visitors. Brochures and sign up sheets were available. Names of potential mentors were then forwarded to our Recruiting Chair, Ann Predy. Amber Nicholson offered a session which resulted in much interest.

An informative newsletter of the past year was published by Barbara Olynyk.

FUNDRAISING

We held a casino which allowed us to allocate precious dollars for the construction of three more classrooms, for the purchase of essential technology (Laptops, television monitors, RACHEL) and for providing continuous improvement to the infrastructure of the school. Thank you to casino chairs, Christina Gaborak and Marjorie Eckert for organizing the volunteers. A HUGE thank you to

all the volunteers! A Pub Night was held at Caffrey's in Sherwood Park. It included a silent auction and a 50/50 raffle. Accolades go to the organizers Amber Nicholson, Stephanie Cunha, Eugene Kuzub and Ada Rishaug for making it such a fun and lucrative event. Two Edmonton Catholic Schools held fundraisers to support our educational initiatives to keep BES in aligned with the 21st century. Edmonton Catholic Schools continue to reach out and support TAAS and BES through student projects which teach and model the virtues of sharing and caring.

BURSARY COMMITTEE REPORT 2025

by Elaine Junk & Carol Bahry

This past year has seen some exciting developments for the Bursary Student Program at BES.

Three of our long time bursary students, Elysee, Joshua and Micka, graduated from grade 13 and are ready to pursue their dreams. Both Elysee and Joshua's sponsors have given extra donations to support some of their university tuition, although this is not part of our mandate. Elysee is enrolled in Pharmacy and Joshua is in Computer Sciences. Micka is interested in a career in Business. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

A special event was held in the spring to honour the sponsors who so faithfully support their bursary students. We had a good turnout (despite the conflict with an Oilers' game). Food was provided as well as musical entertainment from one of the families. A slide show gave a brief overview of the BES program and highlighted each of the bursary students. We highly value and appreciate our sponsors as we know that without them, so much of this would not happen. "Transformation Through Education" is a reality for our students. Updates and photos of all the bursary students were sent out in June and again in December so that sponsors could see their progress. In September three new bursary students started at BES: Tamam in grade two and Clementine and Yaelle in grade one. The TAAS board has chosen to support Clementine and we hope that donations from our community will provide steady support for her.

We look forward to another productive year ahead.

RECRUITMENT & VOLUNTEERS

by Ann Predy

Our volunteer program has progressed very well this year with increasing inquiries and repeat volunteers. At the start of 2025 our volunteers were Patricia Paul and JR Garzon. Tania Nichiporik and Brenda Cleland volunteered from September to November. We are always looking for teachers to volunteer at our ever growing school. This year **The English Language Learning class will be held from August 3 to August 28** for students needing extra help in English. This is a great opportunity for active teachers looking for a summer adventure.

Please contact Ann Predy at recruitment@tanburafrican.org.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Student Bursaries

While Burundi English School is a not-for-profit school, the students do have to pay fees, which are used to operate the school. Because the founders of BES wished that children from low income families would have an opportunity to be educated in their school, TAAS has implemented a bursary program. For \$1000 USD per year, you can sponsor a child to attend BES. Twelve students have been sponsored by generous donors throughout the years. Three Edmonton Catholic Schools have sponsored students: St. Maria Goretti, Monsignor Fee Otterson and Mary Hanley. The Alberta Teachers' Association Local of Edmonton Catholic Schools has sponsored a child. Other children have been sponsored by private individuals. TAAS thanks all of the sponsors for their generosity. All donations to the bursary program are tax deductible. If you would like to contribute to our bursary program but cannot support a child on your own, consider teaming up with other individuals or contributing to the TAAS bursary fund, from which a child will be sponsored when enough funds are contributed.

Join our Board:

We welcome new board members to assist us in our mission. We meet every three months.

Volunteer:

Looking For a New Adventure?

Would you like to:

- share your teaching knowledge?
- help mentor teachers?
- teach English as a second language during your summer break?

Turn your summer, retirement years or time off from your teaching role into a meaningful journey filled with discovery and impact in Burundi, Africa. The Tanbur African Aid society (TAAS) is looking for teachers who would like to teach English classes in the summer or to go during the school year to work along side teachers and students at the Burundi English School (BES). This meaningful journey will be filled with discovering a new culture and experiencing the hospitality of the Burundian people. During their time at BES, volunteers are provided with all the necessary amenities (housing and meals). Flights, vaccines and expenses incurred are all tax deductible with receipts.

If you would like to discuss this opportunity with a volunteer who has already been to BES, we would be happy to put you in contact with one of several teachers who have been to Bujumbura.

For more information contact:
Ann Predy at apredy@gmail.com

Our Volunteer Experiences 2025

Visit to Burundi English School January 25 by Stephanie Cunha

February 23, 2026

I spent 4 weeks in Bujumbura at Burundi English School helping in different areas. With Claudine, the principal, we created a Google Drive with the hope that teachers could share resources,,with future thoughts of branching out to mentors in Canada. We completed a workshop for the Junior and Senior High teachers on the RACHEL modules which also included a discussion on 21 Century Learning. The teachers also had time to explore the sites on RACHEL with the goal of finding something relevant to their next lesson. Over the 4 weeks while I was there, the technology teacher was working to finish installing 4 TV's that were bought in February and to install more bandwidth for the school. They also had metal protective cases built for each of the 4 RACHELs. These were installed in secure locations. We also worked with Eric, the English Language Learner teacher to implement reading groups and start the Alberta Reading Intervention Program. Then we held another workshop that had two parts. The first 30 minutes included all teachers and was a discussion about neurodiversity and what that can look like in a classroom. The second portion was tailored for the K-6 teachers with a focus on Language Arts planning as well as trying to implement other learning and teaching strategies into their lessons. After speaking with the principal regarding the summer school program, I spent time sorting through possible English teaching resources that they can use for the program. The four weeks went by so fast! I wish I could have stayed a little bit longer.



Timeline - Bujumbura, Burundi

A Dream Come True

5 Years Later

by: Tania N

February 2020 - I stopped at the TAAS booth at Teacher's Convention: picked up a brochure and signed my name on the list. The last thing I remember is seeing an incredible and inspiring presentation from the lovely Jann Arden... and then...

March 2020 - The world is in Covid lockdown. I learned much later that Burundi really didn't lock down at all; business as usual.

Jump ahead 3 years, I'm cleaning up and I find this information brochure. With all of the Covid chaos, and my own high school aged kids, this idea had completely drifted away. However, a quick email landed me at a TAAS meet and greet at The Rhubarb Coffee House. The next thing I know I am signed in to go to BES in fall 2024.

May 2024 - I'm ready to buy my tickets, this is a big deal, I am kind of freaking out, but I'm ready to leave my family and teaching job for 3 months... and I get an email from Ann that BES has flooded. Not sure if there will be volunteers going. Dreams crushed(for now) I headed back to school in the fall with the intention of trying again in fall 2025.

Spring 2025 - I meet my travel and teaching partner, Brenda, and we buy tickets to Bujumbura. IT'S HAPPENING!

August 2025 - I'm on the plane headed for, what will become, the trip that changes my adult life. I don't know what it is? The people, sights and sounds, the food, or just simply everything, but truth be known, you will never visit a more beautiful place or eat more rice, beans and greens! Welcoming, thoughtful, positive, never was there a moment that I questioned my decision to come to Burundi, however, I did question many of my "pre-Burundi" life choices and made an immediate decision to change my outlook on life.

BES - My introduction to the staff and the school started with a beginning of the year staff meeting, in Kirundi. It is so interesting how all teachers, no matter what language, have the same concerns and questions; even if you do not understand the language completely. I am not sure what I expected on Day 1, but the energy and excitement from the students and staff was amazing. It already felt like I belonged. It was not long until I was having incredible conversations with the older kids, learning about their dreams and aspirations, but at the same time answering questions and wonders about life outside of Burundi. Not forgetting the hugs and unconditional love from the Division One students.

Life in the community - With an open heart, I embraced living in the Kinindo community: Ubuntu Cafe up the road, a new church every Sunday and the occasional trip downtown to the market. Don't forget the live music and nightlife. BES staff love to go out and have fun. Take every chance you can, and just say yes, even if you're not sure.

I loved walking around, meeting the neighbourhood people, buying fresh fruit from them, hearing their stories. I was even fond of the rooster next door whom I lovingly named Dan. He had absolutely no sense of time, but his wake up call made me laugh, no matter what time of the night it was.

Should You Go? - Yes! If you have an open heart and an open mind, I encourage you to go. You will never forget or regret your decision.

Brenda Cleland's Burundi Visit - September to December, 2025

After a late start due to the illness of my father, I arrived in Bujumbura 2 weeks later than my initial date. The flights were seamless and I was met at the airport by the principal, Claudine.

Jeanne, a member of the BES Board, secured a house for the volunteers from a friend. It was beautiful - three bedrooms, two bathrooms, huge living room and dining room, inside and outside kitchen and lots of storage. An outbuilding housed Hilaire, the man who looked after us. He cooked, cleaned and did laundry. He also ran the kitchen at the school. My partner, Tania, and I were pleased to pay for some repairs to his bike so that he could travel with more comfort. The yard was newly planted and was kept up by a groundsman. There was a beautiful front terrace. We brought furniture from inside so we could enjoy the yard and outside.

We were surprised that there was no fuel at the gas stations, so everyone, us included, walked everywhere. It felt safe at all times. Everyone was friendly and helpful. Our pale faces were an anomaly and kids and adults stopped to watch us walk. The walk to school took between 10 to 20 minutes. The school was very large -almost 500 students from prekindergarten (age 1 ½) to grade 13. Classrooms were filled at the elementary level with 25 or more students each. No room for "cozy corners," "classroom libraries" or flexible seating. The teachers preferred desks for the students so, while the sea cans used for storage had many tables in great shape, they were only used by the kindergarten teachers. I spent the first several weeks in the grade two room. The young man whom I mentored preferred what we would consider "old fashioned teaching" - lots of copying off the board (with little or no understanding) rote learning (where the loudest kids set the learning levels) and little hands-on or collaborative learning. Over the weeks we worked on organizing the seating plan, changing the wall displays to provide learning assistance, making posters with learning strategies, creating routines to ensure that the students knew what was expected, making free time activity books, etc.

The principal asked me to spend some time with the three kindergarten classes: 1 ½ to 3, years, 4 year olds and for 5 year olds. We created learning and activity centers and initiated some new ideas.

I received a tremendous amount of help and support from the principal Claudine, Jeanne, the IT expert Raymond, our home support (he even checked to make sure we got home safely) Hilaire and Dagoma, the everything helper. Dagoma changed our money, helped us get cabs when we needed them, took us out to see the markets and and and and.... He helped us with many things.

During my last days I had a traditional lunch of Casava Ubugari (instead of the usual lunch provided by the school) and a sports day at a park with drinks afterwards, a present of a traditional dress etc. It was lovely. Thank you for giving me this opportunity. It was an amazing experience.

Dogma showing Brenda & Tania Bujumbura

Hilaire cooking



Gr. 2 working



Burundi English School

BES staff together for team building



BES staff presenting Brenda with a thank you gift.

