

Please note: For summer 2021, GRAP is offered as a **remote** opportunity. If conditions change (Tufts allows international travel, and the country where the research takes place allows incoming student researchers), we will consider allowing students to travel internationally.

Faculty: Linda V. Beardsley, Senior Lecturer, Department of Education, School of Arts & Sciences

Project Locations: Remote work from home or at Tufts University/Medford, MA and Nyamata, Rwanda

Dates: TBD

Project Title: Inshuti: Researching the Power of Mentoring

Project Details: The Maranyundo Initiative is a remarkable example of a global partnership formed to address a complex global issue: the education of girls in Sub Saharan Africa. The Initiative began after a group of Boston women and Rwandan women met at a Women Waging Peace Conference at the Kennedy School in 2000. The Rwandan delegation was headed by Senator Aloisea Ayumba. So moved by her speech and her vision of the ways the education of girls could help Rwanda rise from the devastation of the Genocide Against the Tutsis, the Boston women asked, "What can we do to help you." Without hesitation, the Senator replied, "Help us build a middle school for girls." In 2008, that vision became a reality when the Maranyundo School for Girls (MGS) accepted its first class of 60 girls in Nyamata Rwanda. In 2015, at the request of the Rwandan families and administration, the school expanded to include a STEM high school. Now the campus houses 400 students from grades 7-12 and is owned and run by the [Benebikira Order](#). Over 50% of the students are from economically vulnerable rural families throughout the country. The full story of the founding of the school, and Senator Ayumba's vision can be found [here](#). Dr. Beardsley's blog documenting her research trips to Rwanda can be found [here](#).

In recent years, the DREAM project funded by USAID has been researching and documenting the power of mentorship in encouraging young women to continue their education through high school and in post-secondary programs. Currently, the Maranyundo Initiative has a program called Inshuti (Kinyawanda for "Friend") connecting recent MGS alumnae studying in the US with one another and the Initiative. The Initiative would like to learn how to expand the Inshuti Program to include the increasing number of MGS alumnae choosing to study in Rwanda and other African countries. They are potential mentors both to one another and to the students currently studying at MGS. The Initiative believes that having a Tufts GRAP student to help us learn more about how a mentorship program could serve current needs would be an excellent opportunity for a Tufts student to participate in a successful international partnership. The student would learn valuable lessons about the history of an East African country, general research skills, facilitating focus groups and global education for girls. They would experience the ways in which a committed individual can impact the future of young women in an African country.

Tasks and Responsibilities of Research Assistant:

Remote work:

- 2 weeks working with MI Board to develop and send surveys.
- 3-4 weeks conducting 3-5 focus groups through Zoom with invited alumnae and current MGS students. "Meeting" over Zoom with current Rwandan education officials; virtual tours of MGS conducted by current students;
- Develop a DRAFT literature review of mentoring programs for encouraging girls in sub-Saharan Africa to continue education.

- 2 weeks writing project report and reflecting on education history of Rwanda. Presentation to MI Board members.

If international travel is allowed:

- Before Field Component: 2 weeks at Tufts working with Linda V. Beardsley and MI Board to develop and send surveys. Reading about Rwandan history. • Develop a DRAFT literature review of mentoring programs for encouraging girls in sub-Saharan Africa to continue their education.
- 3-4 weeks living at the school in Rwanda; meeting students, attending classes; facilitating 3-5 focus groups with invited alumnae and current MGS students with Linda V. Beardsley. (Specific schedule depends on school schedule) Visit to Kigali; tour of Genocide Against the Tutsis Memorial Museum; meeting local education officials; possible tours of other area schools.
- After Field Component: 2 weeks at Tufts writing project report and reflecting on Rwandan education for girls. Presentation to MI Board members.

Qualifications: Students interested in this Global Research Assistant position should have an interest in global education, specifically education of girls. In addition, the successful applicant should demonstrate:

- Some knowledge of colonialism in Africa and its impact on current economic and cultural development, especially in East Africa;
- Interest in learning about Rwandan history including Pre-colonial period, during colonialism, post Genocide Against the Tutsis;
- Some knowledge of STEM education in the economically developing world;
- Interest in learning skills for facilitating focus groups;
- Excellent research and writing skills.

Description of Field Site: The Field Component will be centered at the [Maranyundo Girls School](#) in Nyamata, Rwanda. Accommodations will be in the Guest Residence on the campus of the school. The residence includes sleeping accommodations, meals prepared by staff, a common work space with Wifi. Off campus visits will include visits to Kigali; tour of Genocide Against the Tutsis Memorial Museum; meeting local education officials; possible tours of other area schools. Transportation into Kigali and to potentially visit other school sites will be provided by the school van and driver. The school is maintained by a 24-hour security system including a guarded gate area and night patrols. There is also a nurse living on campus in the dormitory with the students.

Housing in Rwanda: Accommodations will be in the Guest Residence on the campus of the school. The residence includes sleeping accommodations, meals prepared by staff, a common work space with Wifi. Transportation into Kigali and to potentially visit other school sites will be provided by the school van and driver. The school is maintained by a 24-hour security system including a guarded gate area and night patrols. There is also a nurse living on campus in the dormitory.