



MFS REPORT

Name

Year and term for exchange

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VT23

Country for the project

Tanzania

Degree programme

Civil Engineering and Urban Management – Msc Civil and Architectural Engineering

## Minor Field Study in Tanzania, Tabora – A once in a lifetime experience

### Before departure

I had not planned to do a Minor Field Study but went to the introduction meeting 1 month before the application was about to close. After the meeting me and my thesis partner were blown away and very inspired by the adventure, and we decided that we should give it a chance a try to find a project. We got in contact with Engineers Without Borders Sweden (EWB-SWE) and were introduced to a project in Tanzania, Tabora, where a school was to be built. I have always dreamt about doing volunteer work in Africa, so Tanzania was a coincidence, but It felt like a perfect match. I had never been to Tanzania before, so I did not know what to expect. But since I have been doing volunteer work in Nepal before, I expected it to be tough and challenging, but also very rewarding. Now after my trip, I am forever grateful for all the beautiful memories and new insights the field study has given me.

Before departure, it was a lot of preparation. We had to plan our trip and find a good scope for our master's thesis. We also had to take vaccinations and apply for a visa.

### Upon arrival

We decided to go to Tanzania at the beginning of February, to have plenty of time to finish the writing of the report back in Sweden. We were well received by our organization when we arrived in Tanzania, and they took care of us during our whole stay in Tabora. We conducted our field studies for 8 weeks, which was enough to see and do everything we wanted.

### Financials

Tanzania is cheap compared to Sweden. We stayed in a town called Tabora, and everything there were very cheap. During our stay we did some travels to Safari and Zanzibar, and we could clearly see that the prices in more touristy places were much higher. So depending on where in Tanzania you are, the price will vary. Although, in general we experienced Tanzania cheaper than Sweden.

### Accommodation

Our organization in Tabora organized the accommodation for us. They have a volunteer house with three bedrooms. We got one bedroom each with a private bathroom, and a woman from the organization stayed in the other bedroom. She took care of us during our stay and cooked breakfast, lunch, and dinner for us every day. We paid approximately 1600 SEK for both food and accommodation every week. The standard was low compared to Sweden, but it was good enough.



## Project

We were involved in a project in Tabora, where they are constructing a school for teenage mothers, who previously were banned from continuing their education in public schools. The school is in an early stage but it is supposed to host 450 students, be as self-sufficient as possible, and be completed by 2025. The initiative to build the school comes from the organization Tumaini Open School, and EWB-SWE is helping out with expertise and knowledge. We were given the opportunity to visit Tabora both as EWB volunteers and to conduct the field study for our Master Thesis. We study Civil engineering at KTH and our aim of the study was to investigate and suggest more sustainable solutions, mainly connected to building technology and design. For instance, we investigated the possibility of more sustainable building materials, such as Interlocking Earth Blocks. The information we gathered in Tanzania was also important for EWB-SWE, since we could contribute with inputs for the completion of a land use plan. When we were back in Sweden, we were also involved in writing a feasibility study for the project for EWB. Hopefully, we can continue to be a part of the project as volunteers for EWB even after the completion of the thesis, that is something that I believe will be beneficial even for EWB.

We had very good support from our contact person, who is the head of Tumaini Open School. He helped us with everything we needed in Tabora and organized interviews in which he participated as a translator.



### Country

I enjoyed Tanzania and would love to visit again in the future. The people were very friendly, and everyone was very hospitable. The country is very big with a lot to see. They have beautiful beaches and clear blue oceans in the east, the highest mountain in Africa in the north, and some of the best national parks for wild animal spotting.

I enjoyed the country but of course, experienced some cultural shocks. During our stay, we had to learn to take it easy and adapt to the pace of society. Sometimes we were frustrated that things took an unnecessarily long time and were unnecessarily complicated. We also found it difficult at times to not be able to communicate with the local people and miscommunications was sometimes a problem. The people in Tabora was very religious, and it was unusual for us to pray at the table before each meal.

### Leisure and social activities

In Tabora, it was not very much to do. Very few local people spoke English and we were pretty much the only internationals in the town. Due to safety, you are not supposed to walk outside during the night, so we stayed in every evening reading books and watching movies, which became a bit boring after a while. We, therefore, went on a few trips during our stay to see more of the country. We went to Arusha and did Safari in Serengeti, spent one weekend in Mwanza, and ended our stay in Zanzibar. Since we did some fun trips and adventures, we were fine with not doing too many social activities in Tabora.



### Sustainability

During our stay in Tanzania we did smaller trips with bus, I would definitely recommend it as a more sustainable way of travel but also to experience the local community better for a cheap price. In Tabora people are very good at using the local resources they have, and almost all food we ate were locally produced or grown in the garden, which is sustainable.

Our project was connected to the Global Sustainable Development Goals in many ways. The school aims to provide education for vulnerable girls, which is clearly connected to the goal “Gender equality” and “Quality Education”. Our study about sustainable technical solutions involved the goals

“Sustainable consumption and production”, “Sustainable cities and communities” and “Clean water and Sanitation”. Our study is clearly connected to these goals since we suggested sustainable technical solutions that uses less carbon intense building materials with high durability and discussed potential rooftop water harvesting systems, to ensure a stable water source for the school.