

Tanzania Study Tour

August 8 – 21, 2022

Prepared by Erik Val

This study tour to Tanzania was part of a two year Partnership Development project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The project, *Indigenous Knowledge Bridging of Land and Water Governance in Tanzania and Canada (IKG)*, focuses on the roles, mechanisms and importance of traditional knowledge in the management of natural resources. It has also been important in building relations and cultural connections between the indigenous communities which in this case are the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN) from Yukon, Canada and Loita and Parakuiyo Massai from Enguserosambu and Elerai, respectively in Tanzania.

Project partners and tour participants:

University of Victoria – Geography Department

Crystal Tremblay, PhD, Assistant Professor

Kate Herchak, Masters Student

Carcross / Tagish First Nation

Sean McDougall, Heritage Manager

Tracy Camilleri, Waters Researcher

Sheena Johns, Lands Researcher

Jewel Davies, Youth Climate Change representative

NaVarro Davies, youth representative

Kesho Trust

Bruce Downie, PhD, Founding Director

Erik Val, traditional land use researcher

Ereto Maasai Youth (EMAYO)

Emmanuel Ole Kileli, Founding Director

Enguserosambu Forest Trust (EFT)

Terere Tutayo, Community Researcher

August 10:

On arrival at Kilimanjaro International Airport, Tanzania, the team rested from their long journey and met the local team members at the Forest Hill Lodge, on the western outskirts of Arusha. There was also a brief orientation meeting and the opportunity to meet the drivers, Lucas and Said, who would be supporting us throughout the tour.



August 11:

Although the original community visit was intended to be with our partners the EFT in Enguserosambu, land use conflicts in the region posed a security risk which prevented the visit. Instead, a new itinerary had been developed with the support of another partner organization of the Kesho Trust in Tanzania, the Pastoralist Livelihoods Support and Empowerment Programme (PALISEP). After our dusty, bumpy and exhilarating introduction to the Great Rift Valley and some of the wildlife that endure those harsh conditions, we arrived the Lengai Safari Lodge for showers and rest.

Robert Kamakia, Executive Director of PALISEP, met the team at the lodge and outlined the upcoming activities in Engaresero (meaning the “white water” that is coming from the Rift Valley escarpment), a Maasai community adjacent to Lake Natron.



Two local leaders for the tour: Robert Kamakia (right); Emmanuel ole Kileli (left)

August 12:

To appreciate Maasai culture and their lifestyle meant an early start to visit a boma (a family homestead) before the cattle left for pasture after being milked. Since the women have a major role for activities in the boma, they explained the design of the houses that they build, how the calabash is used to collect milk from livestock, how these calabashes are cleaned and sterilized with hot coals from the boma fire, and how a bow and arrow is used to draw blood from the cows for various Maasai ceremonies.



Throughout the boma visit discussions focused on the importance of cattle in Maasai culture, their relation to children at birth, cattle as a measure of wealth, and as a means to maintain inter-family relations and connections. A variety of environmental and cultural topics were also discussed including: the importance of water in such a dry climate; the importance of land for grazing; issues of food and health; and, cultural practices such as the role of the Moran, the young warriors, in supporting and protecting the community and their responsibility in caring and safe guarding livestock including cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys. It was interesting to see the parallels drawn by Sean to the land and water relation that the C/TFN have and the harvesting of wildlife, and how that defines them culturally.



In the afternoon the group visited a Maasai meat camp where goat sides and quarters were being roast on sticks beside a fire and meat was boiled in water with medicinal roots and plants and then stirred by a special paddle stick to create a bone broth which is a traditional energy drink (which is similar to that of the C/TFN). While sitting on a tree trunk beside a stream, the team enjoyed the traditional meal.



Two male elders from the community, Gideon Mollé and Saibulu Laizer assisted by some of the warriors, told stories and provided explanations of the cultural practices relating to the camp and the food, medicines, environment, and ceremonies. They also described the structure of Maasai society and the role of the spiritual leader in the community. Sean noted that while different in some respects, there are many similarities between Maasai and C/TFN culture, especially in the strong relationship that both have in terms of land, water, resources and their related cultural connections.



Elders: Saibulu Laizer (left); Gideon Mollé (right)

Later we attended a post wedding celebration which highlighted the dancing and singing of both men and women.



Reflecting on the days events many topics of interest were raised in discussion:

- the similarities in experiences in relation to a shared colonial past and present including traumas such as land and resource dispossession, the residential school experience and other forms of cultural alienation
- the strong role of culture in: managing and protecting the environment; the ceremonies with their associated song, dance and traditional dress; the administration and practices of medicine and healing; and, the role of and respect for elders.
- the similarity of the important and integrated role of animals in both cultures.
- knowing who you as a people and knowing and living your culture, such as the Maasai do, is fundamental to being strong and confident as individuals and as communities
- benefits from tourism, while important to both cultures, have not met expectations. It was also recognized that tourists have a responsibility to learn from the Maasai culture and their relation to land, water and resources.

August 13:

The day started by visiting with the spiritual leader and traditional medicine man of the Maasai community. He was accompanied by helpers who assisted during the individual ceremonies. He used a calabash to store, shake and dispense small stones on a tarp which were counted and organized into piles using a formula which was not apparent but did, along with some probing specific questions, assist him in making predictions for the person whose concerns were being considered. Breathing lightly into the calabash to mix with air of the medicine man was also part of the process to make the necessary connection with the person involved. Also, herbs were mixed with water and given to people to drink along with specific stones to hold from the calabash. In some cases, herbs and root extracts were smudged on the person's skin by the medicine man. Some of our group experienced individual sessions of 10 to 15 minutes with him to deal with their own personal issues. He wanted to know the person's name and he would ask very pointed questions of the individual to help him in making his predictions.



During the afternoon we switched accommodations to a fully serviced tent camp called the Maasai Giraffe Ecolodge then enjoyed some rest around the pool before meeting with representatives of a community-based development organization (CBO), named Eramatare Community Initiatives that works with PALISEP. The managers, Loibangatik Lakiteng, and Luka Lekide, described for us the variety of their projects including: skills training programs for teachers, accountants, women and youth entrepreneurs, local land use planning committees and general literacy; building projects for teachers' housing, fencing to control land development, water supply and distribution facilities and solar systems; service projects providing health services for the very poor, a flying doctor program, a tree planting program and establishing a revolving small loans program for women.

In response to their presentation, a number of questions and observation arose concerning: how is balance achieved between conservation and development; what is the level of organizational capacity; how are the decisions made and priorities established; who owns the tourism companies, who benefits and what are the impacts of tourism. The managers explained that education is a high priority. They have a 5 year plan in place, there are by-laws to guide the plan and a board of directors for the CBO generally makes decisions on priorities with significant decisions involving the community. Funding comes from 3 sources – members, tourism operations and donors (e.g. United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) to implement the fencing program; tourism companies to fund social programs and to hire and train local guides; and entrance fees from the local parks and conservation areas to support organizational requirements and projects). It was a most enlightening visit on both the challenges and the approaches to significant development issues.



Photo: E. Val



Photo: B. Downie

August 14:

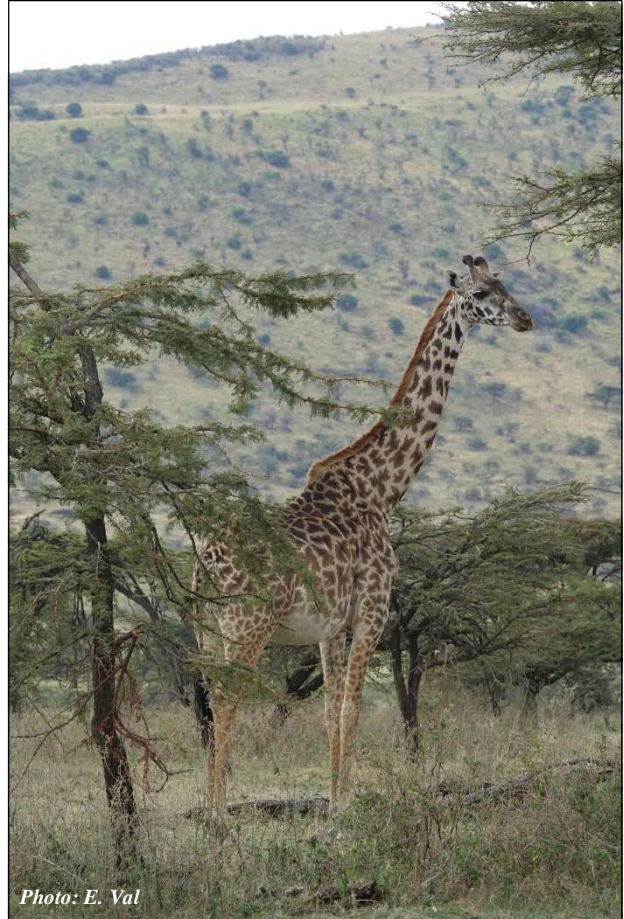
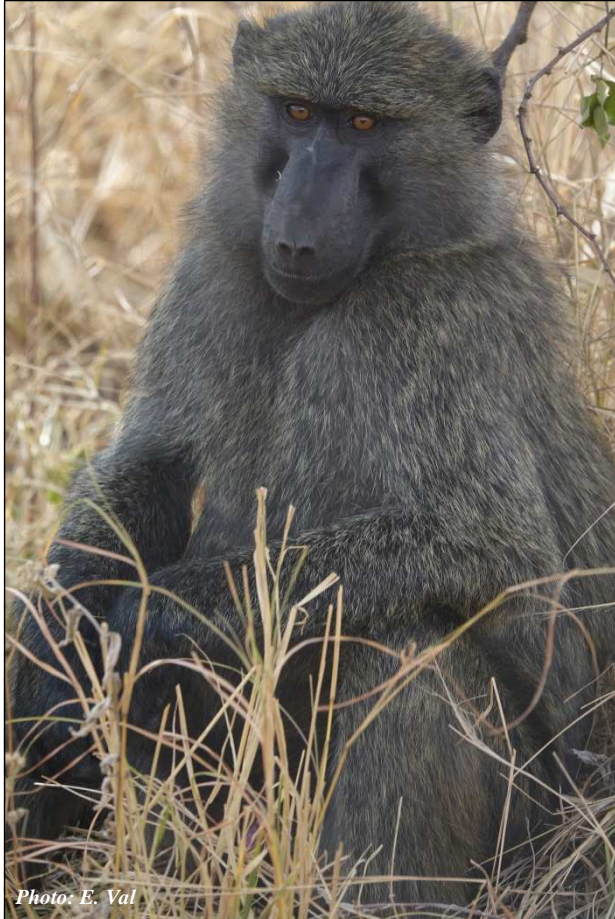
Our route from Engaresaro to the Serengeti took us past Enguserosambu Ward so we detoured into the area for a brief meeting. On a view point with a spectacular view over a large part of the community forest lands managed by the EFT, we met with William Parmiria, the Enguserosambu Ward Councillor and Anna Shololoi, a community researcher from Ng'arwa. William briefly explained the importance of the forest as an example of the value of traditional land management, in contrast to other nearby government forest lands which have been severely degraded. Before leaving we took the opportunity to present poster maps prepared for the 2019 traditional land use and occupancy report.



Photo: B. Downie

Left to right: Terere Tutayo; Anna Shololoi; Erik Val; William Parmiria

From Enguserosambu we carried on arriving in the Serengeti by mid afternoon and taking our time wildlife viewing on the way to the Serengeti Safari Lodge, our accommodation during our stay.



August 15 and 16:

Experiencing the open plains and riverine woodlands of Serengeti National Park and the world's largest intact and unfilled volcanic caldera in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area challenges description. The abundance and diversity of wildlife and the vastness and grandness of the landscapes are truly amazing.

While the visit was short it did not disappoint, providing some wonderful 'up close and personal' experiences observing large mammals (such as buffalo, elephant, hippo and giraffe), carnivores (such as hyenas, jackal, lion, and leopard), antelope (such as wildebeest, impala, eland and gazelles), primates (such as monkeys and baboons), birds (such as bustard, hornbill, vulture, weaver and stork) and some of the lesser known species such as civet, mongoose, water monitor, klipspringer, and dik dik. Our tour of these World Heritage Sites ended in Karatu at the Hillview Hotel.



August 17:

This rest day provided opportunities for relaxation and recovery from the travel and activities of the past 5 days as well as for visits to gift shops offering Maasai and other Tanzania art and crafts. There were in-house carvers at work and happy to show us the various woods and tools they used and how they



Photo: E. Val

created their pieces. In addition to clothing, carvings and beading, Tanzanite, a Tanzania gemstone, was also of interest to some of the group. Much was purchased as gifts for family and friends back in Canada and for personal memories of the trip.



Photo: E. Val



Photo: E. Val

August 18:

This was a long travel day from Karatu to Elerai. We collected supplies en route as we were camping in Elerai at an area just a short walk from the village centre that is being developed by EMAYO as cultural camp for tourists.

August 19:

Our first stop was a tour of the EMAYO office in Kibirashi, recently renovated following the vandalism associated with the earlier conflict between the agriculturists of Kibirashi and the Elerai based Maasai. The contested area has been formally zoned for pasturing purposes since 1998 but as Emmanuel explained, there has been constant farming incursions on to these lands due to expanding population in the area and the lack of government commitment to enforcement.

There are parallels to the situation near Enguserosambu although there the eviction of Maasai from their traditional grazing and living areas is to provide exclusive tourism and hunting rights to a foreign owned company. The impacts of such policies are similar – hardship for the Maasai as they lose important grazing land and water sources.

From the EMAYO office, the group went on a protocol visit with the Kibirashi Ward Councillor and to meet the Kibirashi Village Chairman along with available councillors. They thanked us for coming and indicated they wished us a good and safe visit.



Project team meeting with Kibirashi Chairman and counsellors.

Arriving in Elerai from Kibirashi, we were welcomed to the community with singing and dancing before settling in the shade of a large tree near the village office for a community meeting. Emmanuel provided an overview of our project and its connection to the previous visit by representatives from Enguserosambu to visit First Nations in BC and Yukon. He further explained that this tour provides C/TFN representatives an opportunity to visit and discuss important experiences, issues and concerns facing Indigenous people in both Tanzania and Canada. He spoke very eloquently and stressed that tour is about sharing and learning from common traumas, and that these visitors are not just being tourists. He encouraged the C/TFN people to ask questions and share their experiences. Terere further explained our program so far during tour.



Photo: E. Val

Project team participants introduced themselves and provided some initial reflections from their culture and the time on the tour. Some of the points they raised were:

- the strong link that all Indigenous peoples worldwide have to their culture, the land and water, and resources that identifies who they are
- the common struggle for their rights and for practicing their culture
- supporting each other in these struggles is critical
- the importance of this tour personally; we feel completely at home with the Maasai and appreciated so much the wonderful greetings and kindness of the people; we feel such a strong bond with the Maasai; we will share the experience with own families and community



Photo: E. Val

Emmanuel introducing the tour to the community meeting.



Photo: E. Val

Sean introducing himself to the meeting.

Thomas, one of the community leaders, responded. Some of the points he made were:

- the traditional Maasai ways of governing and exerting power have been eroded by modern ways.
- the community helps itself by sharing food and water among homesteads, and that the Moran structure provides the basis of support and protection for the community. It teaches young men the importance of serving and creates a sense of purpose and pride which is fundamental to keeping Maasai culture strong. It is a system that is build on respect between the generations, young to elder, and women to men.
- there are concerns: non-Maasai are living in their traditional forests and taking trees for firewood, building material and for making charcoal. These forests are important to the Maasai for ceremonial, healing and everyday purposes such as meat camps, and now they are under threat with ever expanding, illegal activities including agriculture that the government allows and at times encourages to happen.
- the Maasai of Elerai currently do not have the capacity to defend their grazing lands and forests. They struggle to keep their ancestral homeland and feel that legally they have run out of options and do not know what to do. He said they were happy that the C/TFN people were here to share with them so they could learn how to defend the land.

A spokesperson of the women also welcomed the tour to Elerai and thanked EMAYO for arranging it and all the associated research that has been part of the project. They felt connected and said that they have similar challenges as Indigenous people have in Canada such as the taking of traditional lands and water, and the destroying of forests for burning wood and clearing land for farming. The women have a hard life because they do so much work in the homestead and community. Earlier projects like the water projects have been very helpful during these times of growing drought and they hope the partnership with the Indigenous people of Canada will result in further efforts such as these.



Following the meeting and discussion, the guests were honoured with Maasai traditional clothing and invited to join in the singing and dancing. After the dancing, people mingled for a while for further greetings and photos, and left for supper at the camp before retiring for the night after a long day of meetings, discussions and learning.



Jewel participating in the dancing.

August 20:

On this day, we met at the village center with the local community researchers and community members who would lead small groups in discussing a variety of aspects of Maasai life and culture. Three groups were organized focused on: 1) women's cultural roles, responsibilities and the ensuing issues; 2) traditional knowledge and the relationship of the environment to cultural practices from the perspective of the men; and, 3) land use planning in the Elerai area and an understanding of the relationship with surrounding communities. Each group had the opportunity to learn from practical examples on the land, the importance of the traditional lifestyle of the Maasai people in Elerai and the struggles they are facing.

Women's group: This group explored the role of women in the household especially relating to the responsibilities for household chores, water supply and child rearing. The women also explained the range of traditional foods and medicines as well as spiritual practices and the importance of their relationship to the environment.



Participating in the demonstration of a water ritual.

Men's group: On the way to a hill top ceremonial site, the men elders explained the uses of various plants as part of cultural ceremonies, and as food and medicines for both people and cattle. They also spoke about the passing of traditional knowledge from one generation to the next and changes that they are experiencing in Maasai society.



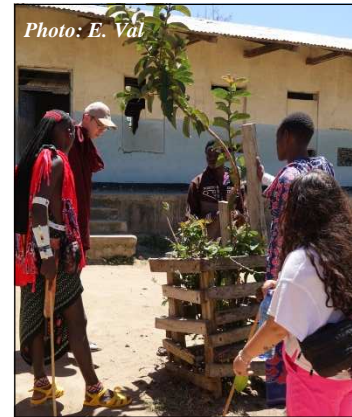
Photo: B. Downie

Sean with the men elders learning and sharing traditional knowledge.



Photo: B. Downie

Land use planning group: this group explored community sites and issues related to development, especially livestock management, water supply and building materials. The tour concluded with a discussion of the land use conflicts with neighbouring agricultural communities and study of the government prepared 1998 agriculture-grazing land use plan and recent efforts to resolve the conflicts that have continued till the present.



The closing session of the day provided the opportunity for people to express their heartfelt thanks for the openness and sharing that characterized their short time together. Strong feelings of connection and appreciation demonstrated the importance of the connection made during the tour, along with the commitment to continue to strengthen relationship between the communities.



Back at the camp, the community researchers from both Elerai and Enguserosambu met with the project team around the camp fire to discuss the research program. Together with Emmanuel they outlined the results of the Year 1 research, including the household surveys, livelihood questionnaires and community opportunities. Issues identified in the research included: drought and water scarcity; livestock predators such wild pigs and hyenas; and, livestock and people diseases. Areas of achieved improvement were identified: communications, wireless phone service and internet; the development of the Elerai primary school; health services and the strength of the traditional language. High priority challenges were also identified: grazing land and forest encroachment and conflicts; lack of government funding for medical services; and water availability and security. They also outlined key priorities: improve livestock management practices; address the land related conflicts fairly and for the long term; and, improve the roads and electrical services.

The session finished with discussion of the upcoming community research. The Year 2 research themes are: land use and occupancy mapping, migration, youth economic aspirations, water and climate change (to be covered in the land use mapping work), traditional knowledge and culture connections to the forest, and identification of future community priorities and possible development scenarios.



Photo: E. Val

Community Researchers

Left to right: Kariana Katai, Rhoda Kashuma, Anna Shololoi, Terere Tutayo, Edward Uka, Robert Sokinoi

August 21:

Departure day meant that some of the project team traveled to Moshi to catch the flight home the following day. Others, Emmanuel, Terere, Kate and Erik, stayed behind in Elerai to carry on with the research program in the community in the areas of youth employment, land use mapping, water management and climate change. This was the official close of the tour and by any measure was deemed an overwhelming success and much appreciated by all.



Photo: E. Val