



## **IT University Travel Report**

*Dear Student, this is a template – the aim is to inspire other students who may wish to follow in your footsteps. You are free to give your report the shape you want and to go beyond the questions, as long as you cover the information asked for below. You are also very welcome to include pictures and contact information – but you need not. Remember that the report will be made available on the intranet.*

**Study Programme at IT University:** Digital Innovation & Management

**Activity Abroad:** Field work for master's thesis

**Exchange Period:** semester spring 2019

## **Your stay abroad**

**Please describe your stay abroad:**

I travelled to Tanzania to carry out field work and perform interviews for my master's thesis. I stayed in various areas of the country, including Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Kigoma and Mugumu near the Serengeti.

**What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?**

My thesis focuses on empowerment in Tanzania by applying participatory science and open mapping portals. Several organizations, university students and volunteers participate in this and I managed to setup appointments for interviews, with organizations as well as volunteers, which I interviewed during my time there.

**Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?**

Personally, I experienced Tanzania first hand and met a culture that I've read and heard a lot about. I believe it was an important aspect (I prefer a somewhat anthropological approach to my studies) to properly understand the topic, the issues and the people involved in the projects.

Academically I learned a lot as well. I have experience with carrying out interviews but doing it in Tanzania with locals is very different – both setting up the interview and carrying it out. It made me spend a lot of time considering my own position as a white, western researcher in an African country.

## **Arranging your stay**

**Please give a short description of the process involved in arranging your stay:**

The main challenge was to reach informants. I initially tried through e-mails, contact formulas of official websites and so on, but to no avail. I ended up using LinkedIn to establish the first point of contact and from there I kept in touch with my informants via WhatsApp.

This wasn't really related to arranging my stay, but rather related to having a reason for my stay. It required a lot of flexibility, since the Tanzanian approach to this, rarely includes making an appointment the day before at the earliest.

**What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?**

I primarily used my informants. I planned all the practical aspects of my stay myself. I happened to have a friend of a friend who also did his thesis Tanzania, who helped me for a lot of things and guidance.

I was also in contact with a few people through an anthropological network on Facebook, where I asked for advice on carrying out field work in Tanzania.

**How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?**

Arranging my stay was done mostly by buying tickets to Tanzania, locating a hotel online and book it. I stayed at hostels and hotels. I was meeting my informants at various locations in Tanzania and planned and booked basically on the go, as setting up appointments in Africa was a bit challenging.

Deciding on hostel/hotel was primarily done by location in relation to the informant I was meeting with and price-quality considerations. As a student I stayed a lot of cheap and crappy places, but that's part of the experience.

## **Expenses and Financing**

**Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad**

Travelling to Africa is of course expensive, but I have known for a while that I wanted to do my thesis focused on an African country, given the opportunity, so I have been saving up money from my part time job.

My finances are still messed up a few months later but given the opportunity to do field work in Africa, it doesn't really matter. As I covered the expenses myself (with exception of ITU's travel pool), it did turn out to be an expensive experience, when having to cover, plane tickets to and from Tanzania, plane tickets domestically, hotels, food and so on, it did cost me a lot.

But money can be earned again, so I didn't have a moment of doubt that I'd spend all the money I had, if it was required.

**Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?**

I didn't apply for any scholarships, though I probably should have.

**Recommendations for other students:**

If the opportunity of going abroad presents itself, whether it is related to a project or to study abroad, just do it. The money can be made, and you'll always learn great things about yourself – personally and academically - by being reflected in a different culture.

As you watch and participate in a world around you that is different from your own, you are undeniably forced to also watch yourself from the perspective of the different world.