

# A NORAD SUPPORTED EXCHANGE PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS

## LOMWE SECONDARY SCHOOL, TANZANIA AND TRONDHEIMKATEDRALSKOLE, NORWAY

### REPORT FROM THE EXCURSIONS IN 2006

Written by Helga Hoel

---

#### INTRODUCTION

Trondheim Cathedral School has offered Development Studies as an elective subject since 1990. From 1994 - 2000 we co-operated with NORAD through the Norwegian Association for Ex-volunteers to include excursions to and from Tanzania in the programme, and since 2000, the organization Friendship North/South has operated the school exchange programme for NORAD. We had the first excursions to and from Lomwe Secondary School in Usangi, Tanzania in the spring of 1996. Other excursions followed in 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004 and the sixth excursions, which this report is about, took place in the spring of 2006.

This report is primarily written for NORAD, the funding agency and Friendship North/South as the operating agency, and it is written in English so that our partner school in Tanzania may also read it. Secondly, it is intended for the present and future participating schools in this School Exchange Programme in the hope that we can learn from each other. Finally, it is written for a wider audience of interested people who will have to bear with some of the details necessary to convey to the other target groups.

---

#### THE COURSE CONTENTS

Since the 2000/2001 school year we have had [a national curriculum](#) for the elective course in North/South studies, and we have of course designed our course to cover the objectives in the curriculum. [This web page](#) which has been created for the class, shows how we have accomplished this. Unfortunately this page is only available in Norwegian, but most of the links referred to on the page are in English. The project requirements in the curriculum were addressed as follows: Before Christmas the students wrote land reports where information from almost all the learning targets in the curriculum was needed. After Christmas the excursions comprised the second project, where the students either participated in the visit to Tanzania or in the planning and participating in the programme for our guests during the return visit.

The class periods in the North/South-studies group of about 10 students this year (2005/2006) have by and large been taught by Helga Hoel. Much of the paper work involved with the planning has also been her responsibility. Mari Kvaal has taught some classes and been responsible for the money involved, therefore also for booking the tour with the travel

agencies. The tour leader responsibilities were shared between the two. Helga worked as a headmistress at a secondary boarding school in Kenya through the Norwegian Volunteer Service for two years from 1971 and has been back to East Africa more than fifteen times afterwards. She has been involved with the development studies or North/South studies courses at Trondheim Cathedral School since their inception in 1990 and has been a tour leader for all the excursions to Tanzania. Mari Kvaal has also been in East Africa before when she took part in a field trip while she was studying geography.

---

## **PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE EXCURSION TO TANZANIA**

The preparation for our excursions in the spring of 2006 started at least a year before. As Trondheim Cathedral School was going to be responsible for the final accounts, we needed some basic information from Tanzania to estimate the budget for our application which was due 1 November 2005, much too late in our opinion. We tried to communicate with Lomwe Secondary School, but did not get much of a reply before the deadline. We therefore had to make some educated estimates about costs in East Africa based on what we spent in 2004.

Communication has been a problem so the ideal objective about a shared budget responsibility between the schools in the North and the South has not been possible to meet. Usangi has an analogue telephone line which works on and off and has a terrible echo. It is therefore only suited for short messages. However, with the new mobile phone, the line is more reliable, but the echo is still there. Moreover, it is quite expensive to use. Fortunately Lomwe was linked to an e-mail server in 2003, and everything could have been fine if the electric power supplies had been reliable. Besides, the time concept of the necessity to meet deadlines and answer promptly, has unfortunately not been developed at the same speed as the technology to make full use of this wonderful tool.

Offering an elective course in a secondary school is a long term affair and no ad-hoc work. The course has to be presented to the students for their selection one school year ahead of time. It is therefore imperative for us to know well in advance whether or not we will receive a grant for an excursion. To apply for a grant in November the same school year as the excursions are supposed to take place puts us in a very difficult position. The size of the grant determines how many students we can select for the visits, and the selection must be made by November so that the students involved have enough time to earn money and save for the costs of the visit that they have to pay themselves. If the grant application was to be turned down, students would feel they had selected the course for wrong reasons and the school might decide not to offer it that school year. On the other hand, if the grant was to be reduced in size so that fewer students than planned could participate in the exchange, some unfortunate students would have to be informed that they could not participate after all, a scenario any teacher wants to avoid at all costs.

In 2004 we were able to get favourably priced KLM tickets to KIA, Kilimanjaro International Airport via Amsterdam. This was not the case this time. Tickets to/from KIA were priced about NOK 3000 a piece above the costs from Nairobi or Dar es Salaam. We therefore decided to send the Norwegian delegation via Nairobi and the Tanzanian delegation via Dar es Salaam. The extra costs for transport to and from these cities and Usangi + hotel

expenses should not exceed the cost difference. This turned out not to be the case for the Tanzanian delegation since we only accidentally learned about UK's requirement to have transit visas to travel via London on British Airways a couple of weeks before the delegation was due to travel. There were no warnings about this fact from Friendship North/South, nor did the travel agency say anything about it. We felt cheated and the Tanzanian delegation had to spend five extra days in Dar es Salaam to have their visas processed. That spells 30 extra days in hotel accommodation with food. Everybody can imagine the extra costs involved. We blame both Friendship North/South and the travel agent for the lack of information.

Since the NORAD grant gradually has become smaller over the years and the price of airline tickets have gone up, we did not dare to select more than 4 students for the excursion before we had an indication about how much money we would receive. After the interviews with 5 applicants we found it impossible to exclude one of them, but it soon turned out that one of the applicants found that the excursion coincided with plans she had already made to participate in other activities, so she withdrew her application and we were left with four and a budget too slim to dare include more than four students from Lomwe as well.

It was a risky business to order and pay for the tickets before we knew how big our grant from NORAD would be. We got an indication in December about how much money the Friendship North/South had suggested NORAD should grant us, but contrary to last time received no money in advance to pay for parts of the tickets. The final answer from NORAD arrived just before our departure, and the money was not transferred before we returned from Tanzania! **This is of course not acceptable.** NORAD does not seem to understand that schools do not necessarily have 130 000 NOK to spare to pay for the tickets before the grant money is transferred, or even confirmed granted. It is necessary to book and pay for the tickets well before Christmas in order to make sure that we can travel on the dates that suit us. Besides the costs would rise considerably and upset the budget if this was to be postponed till the week before departure. We urge NORAD to change this procedure so that the deadline next year will be moved from November to April again; the way this was arranged at the time Association of the Ex-Volunteers operated the programme.

We wanted to select both girls and boys for the excursion. To recruit new students for the programme, it is important that some of the participants continue their studies at our school the following year. In mid October 2005 the interested students wrote their applications and were interviewed by a representative from Friendship North/South in November. The interviews together with impressions of their class work were the main basis for the selection. Other requirements were that they were able and willing to host a student from Tanzania on the return visit, and that they could communicate easily in English. The reasons they gave for applying and the possibilities they had to disseminate information about the programme after the excursion, also played a part in the selection. The following students were selected:

Ms Andrea Gustafsson  
Ms Maren Thorsen Johansen  
Mr Leif Ekaas  
Mr Rasmus Guldvik

To raise part of the money needed from our school, the whole class took turns selling parking tickets in our school yard on some Saturdays in the autumn. We promised that some of the

money earned would benefit the whole class during the return visit, not only the lucky ones who would be going to Tanzania. The welcome dinner at the Tyholt tower was paid for this way, and so was the week-end trip to Oppdal. The four students who went to Lomwe were given the revenues from one Saturday's work to cover their visa expenses and their National Park fees.

We knew that we could buy visas for Kenya at the airport and for Tanzania at the border, and arranged for the necessary inoculations in Trondheim in January. Furthermore we wanted to ensure that the students going to Tanzania would receive sufficient information, without making this so exclusive that the rest of the class would lose interest in the course. Once, we gave the other students one of the two weekly class periods off while we answered questions about the tour for those participating in the excursion. We also held a meeting after school hours to give practical travel information where the parents also were invited.

Finally both students and teachers spent some time collecting small gifts such as calendars with beautiful pictures from Norway, ball point pens, note pads etc. Rosenborg Football Club also gave us new footballs for the schools we were going to visit.

---

## **THE EXCURSION PROGRAMME IN TANZANIA**

Two weeks around our school's winter break in February/March 2006 were spent on our visit to Tanzania. We went to Nairobi first, and spent two nights there since experience has taught us that our luggage does not necessarily arrive on the same flight as we do. It did not this time either, but we were prepared for it and had packed our hand luggage accordingly.

The following day we had made arrangements to visit one of the Basic Schools which the charity organization Undugu Society runs in Matare Valley. The slum area there is very bad, but this school is a bright spot which shows that even in such an environment there is a willingness to learn and a hope for a better future. This school also provided a contrast to Lomwe Secondary School, which of course was the chief goal for our excursion. Seeing both a city slum school and a rather prestigious school in the peaceful countryside in Usangi also gave food for reflection around contrasts and opportunities within East Africa.



Beginner class at Matare Basic School. Photo: Rasmus Guldvik 2006

While Helga was waiting for the luggage to be brought to the hotel, Mari and the students went on an excursion to Nairobi National Park in the afternoon. The following day we travelled by bus to Moshi where we were met by the delegation from Lomwe. We tried to change our Norwegian kroner, which used to cause no problem at all before, but now turned out to be difficult after bank hours. Fortunately we had some US dollars as well that we could change in a changing bureau and therefore manage till we reached Arusha on our way back.

We spent about one week in the countryside at hospitable Lomwe Secondary School, taking part in classes and making many short excursions in the neighbourhood, visiting other schools, the district hospital, the local market and a Maasai cattle market in the lowlands. Most of the programme was a repetition of what we had seen during our previous excursions and which we found very interesting and worthwhile then as well as now. An experience that stands out was the day we spent at Karambacha primary school. Here we were met with songs, speeches and dances and we saw with our own eyes that the staff house our colleague Rune Solem laid the foundation stone for in 2002 now was finished with an addition containing a kitchen, a bathroom and a toilet. The money he and his friends had raised had been wisely spent.

At Lomwe we met and became friends with the Tanzanian students and teachers who would come to Norway some weeks later. Since most of the students at Lomwe are borders, our students from Trondheim Cathedral School stayed in one of the school's guest houses. This year the teachers stayed with families. This way we would not intimidate our students and their Tanzanian visitors in the guest house. They could feel free to interact without our supervision. And they did! The two Form 5 girls who had their vacation while we visited, stayed in the same house, while the two boys who would come to Norway later stayed in the dormitories.

Friendship North/South requires that the partner schools undertake a project together as part of the exchange. This was successfully done at Lomwe Secondary school where we again discussed a social issue raised by a literary work. This time their students had put on the play *Three Suitors, One Husband* by the playwright Guillaume Oyônô-Mbia from Cameroon. The play from 1964 deals with arranged marriages and is a set text for the Form 4 exam in English

in Tanzania. Acting it out would therefore benefit all the students at Lomwe, and discussing its implications afterwards involved the whole Norwegian delegation as well.

After an unforgettable week in Usangi both the Norwegian and the Tanzanian students went on a trip to Arusha. We did something together in Arusha as well, which both Tanzanians and Norwegians found very interesting and worthwhile. We visited the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) which has its seat there. The Norwegian students had watched the movie *Hotel Rwanda* on DVD before we went to Africa. We also brought a copy for Lomwe, and had planned to see it together with the students and teachers there. Unfortunately there were so many power cuts that it proved impossible. We did however leave the copy at the school and we know they watched the film later. We also left a BBC videotape interview with the Canadian General Dallaire who led the UN peace keeping forces in Rwanda in 1994. Watching copies of that interview after the excursion both in Trondheim and in Usangi turned out to be excellent follow-up work. In Arusha we were given a video introduction to the ICTR and we also observed two different court cases. Afterwards the President of the court, the Norwegian Judge Erik Møse, took time to exchange a few words with us.



Outside the ICTR. Photo: Rasmus Guldvik 2006

Since this was our last day together, we had a tasty farewell dinner before the Tanzanians went back to Lomwe in the morning and the Norwegians were picked up to go by bus to Nairobi. We had a few hours to see the city centre and for some last minute shopping before we went back to the hotel to pack our things. The following day we flew home, leaving Africa with a lot of pleasant memories.

Details about the programme can be found on [this page](#) and by reading the [students' journals](#).

---

## PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE EXCURSION TO NORWAY

When we were in Usangi we asked both the Tanzanian teachers and students if they had any special wishes about what to see in Norway. We took their suggestions back home with us. Back in Norway, the entire North/South-studies class discussed for two class periods what they wanted their visitors to see. A meeting with the parents of the students who were going

to host the Tanzanian guests was held where we discussed the same issue. We wanted to draw on the resources of the host families as well as on the resources in our school for the final programme.

To prepare Trondheim Cathedral School for the visit from Tanzania the teachers were informed at an informal meeting in the staff room, and an article was written in our weekly news sheet. Some teachers were asked to give special classes in English for our guests. We also encouraged teachers at the Cathedral school to collect money for a scholarship fund for needy students at Lomwe Secondary School. The students who had been to Tanzania also gave talks to their respective classes about their experiences.

---

## **THE EXCURSION PROGRAMME IN NORWAY**

The delegation from Lomwe Secondary School was met at Oslo airport by Helga Hoel who travelled with them by train to Trondheim. The host families came to meet them at the railway station and there was little time for anything else than getting settled and getting acquainted with their host families and the cold weather the first day. On Tuesday our guests went on board two coastal steamers in the harbour before they were introduced to the school staff and some students at a meeting where they also had lunch in the school canteen.

During the school week that followed the Cathedral School organized the [programme](#) during school hours and the host students with their families took over and played an important, active role in the afternoons and evenings, often activating the whole group. When the delegation went on shorter excursions outside the school premises during school hours one of the teachers who went to Tanzania accompanied them and so did a couple of the students from the North/South-studies class on a rotation basis. We went on a city walk, visited Brundalen vocational secondary school, Singsaker Primary School, the University, the Medieval museum, Nidaros Cathedral, the Town Hall, and the Science Centre.

To fill in the gaps the Tanzanian students took part in classes both on an individual basis together with their host students and as a group in some classes, which for their benefit were conducted in English.

During the week-end the Tanzanian students and the whole North/South class went to a skiing resort, Oppdal. There were no adults around and they could talk freely and play in the snow, an entirely new experience for the visitors. This was the last week-end the ski lifts were running and a lot of people took this last opportunity to go skiing or snow boarding at the very end of the season.

---

## **FOLLOW - UP WORK AFTER THE EXCURSIONS**

The follow-up work for the Norwegian students has been to hand in their journals from the excursion to Tanzania for minor factual and English language corrections before they were

published on our school's web site. In addition to this they have given talks to various classes with or without an accompanying slide presentation. The students who did not take part in the excursion to Tanzania all wrote essays where they reflected on the return visit.

The student who will continue for another school year will be asked to contribute during the international week in October 2006. She will also help recruit new participants for the North/South-studies course with the next student exchange due to be scheduled for the 2007/2008 school year, if Friendship North/South still will be running this programme. With the new school reform where there will be no elective subjects, there may be a problem.

From the slides taken by Rune Solem, Helga Hoel, and to a lesser degree Mari Kvaal and Anne Lise Drege, the headmistress of Trondheim Cathedral School, we have had more than 60 duplicate slides made with texts for future use to document all the excursions to East Africa.

Mari Kvaal has been responsible both for the budget and the accounts. Helga Hoel has been responsible for editing the internet pages about the school exchange and writing this report, while the rest of the follow-up work has been shared evenly between us.

The teachers have collected money for a scholarship fund for some students at Lomwe. We met some of the recipients from last year's collection in Usangi. These were students who without this contribution would not have been able to go to school.

---

## EVALUATION

NORAD only pays for 50 per cent of the travel costs for the delegation from Norway and requires that the rest of the total cost for the exchange programme be raised locally. We therefore had to be creative to raise some funds. It is a shame that the education authorities of Sør Trøndelag County will not grant a single penny for this programme as long as other counties have different priorities and quite a different policy. Our students collected money by selling parking tickets for Saturday parking in the school yard and also paid for part of their airline tickets. Trondheim Cathedral School paid for substitute teachers for the week the teachers stayed away from ordinary teaching when they visited Tanzania (half a month's salary for two teachers) and it also paid for the teachers' visas and the gifts for the delegation from Lomwe (English dictionaries). The necessary inoculations for the teachers and the students were also covered by the school, as were phone calls and stamps in addition to other sundry expenses. Since we had to buy the tickets before we learned about the size of our grant, or if we would be granted money at all, we could have landed in an economic disaster as these tickets are not refundable. Since both excursions have to take place in the spring term, it is imperative that the deadline for the application be changed to the spring term. April 1, is a good date. It would give us the time and the peace of mind we need to plan properly.

At the end of the return visit the class met with the Tanzanian delegation and spent two class periods evaluating the programme. Everybody thought it had been a good experience; the ones who hosted the students and who had visited Tanzania, of course, felt they had benefited

the most. Selecting Form 4 and 5 students from Lomwe was absolutely a success compared to previous exchanges when the age differences between the two student groups generally have been too big to easily facilitate meaningful communication. The week-end trip without adults was a success to learn to know each other, and here the rest of the North/South class also felt they were included. They also appreciated the chance they all got to accompany the Tanzanian delegation on shorter excursions during class hours on a rotation basis. They all felt that they were included without missing too many classes. Some of the Norwegian students suggested that the whole class should be more involved in planning the return visit and that they missed being present at the evening meeting we had with the host families.

The Tanzanian students suggested that the Norwegian students should stay in families with some of the teachers in Usangi rather than in the school's guest house. We do not think that would be an improvement. The guest house, centrally located near the dormitories, gives some needed privacy at the same time as it serves as a meeting point for the two student groups.

The DIT (Doing it together) project, which is a requirement for the exchange programme, turned out to be a great success this year also. It was the second time now that a piece of literature was used to discuss a social issue. The suggestion for the piece this time came from Lomwe. The preparation for the play was not too demanding or time consuming. It involved a lot of people and for the Lomwe students the play was part of their curriculum and therefore meaningful.

The other DIT project the Norwegian and the Tanzanian exchange students did together was to visit the ICTR (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) in Arusha. It did not involve so many people, but it gave the exchange students a common experience about something neither of the groups knew very much about beforehand, and it also took care of the Human Rights aspect of the exchange. Tanzanians do not normally visit the court; they only see that prices have risen in Arusha as a result of the international staff of more than 800 people working there on international UN salaries. This is something which in itself is worth discussing. What are the benefits of a very affluent foreign segment of the society and what local consequences does it entail?

Communication between our schools between visits is an area that still could be improved. Although Lomwe now has e-mail access, the awareness of the necessity to answer promptly to meet deadlines is not always there. It is true that there are many power cuts and that the postal system is not always reliable, but that does not touch the core of the problem which is a different time concept in our respective cultures.

Seeing is believing, as the saying goes. Participating in this programme no doubt opens eyes, changes attitudes and gives a more profound understanding of cultural and other differences between countries and people in the North and the South for everybody involved. In spite of everything said above, we feel that the programme is running along sound lines and that both schools are benefiting from it. We realize that the exchange between our two schools with more or less the same people running the programme in both schools over 10 years is unique in the history of the school exchange programme. Friendships have been made and strengthened over the years. New educational impulses travel both ways enriching the schools. It is no secret that it has been an exhaustive semester where Mari Kvaal and I have

put in a lot more hours than the school is able or willing to pay for. Everything considered, it has still been a rewarding experience we are more than willing to repeat in two years' time.