



The flows of plastics and its future on Zanzibar



Before departure

Ever since I can remember I have loved traveling. Experiencing new cultures and exploring new environments has always been fascinating to me. Through my own previous travels in Africa and Asia, I have witnessed a lot of misery and unfair conditions and always felt the desire and need to contribute to a better world in any way possible regardless of the results yielding bigger or smaller impacts. I came across Minor Field Studies during my first year at KTH when researching the website for different possibilities to study abroad. I kept the possibility in mind during my first years at KTH but did not develop an idea until autumn semester 2022. When visiting Bali in Indonesia 2018 I found that they were lacking proper waste management. There were a lot of waste, and especially plastics, floating around in the ocean. Seeing with own eyes what impacts plastics waste has on animals and environment was tragic and with this as a foundation I started researching other development countries around the world lacking proper waste management. That is when I came across Tanzania with a lack of proper plastics waste management and found the company Zanrec on Zanzibar. After contacting the company and the manager Justin who was warm and welcoming it felt like I had found the project for me, and thereafter I handed in my application. The idea of my project was to understand and map the waste management systems on Zanzibar. By doing so, I wanted to identify the flows of plastics, the challenges connected to the waste management and possible improvement areas.

Before arrival I was not 100% sure of what to expect. I performed the project all by myself and was thereby travelling solo. I have travelled solo before and was not nervous at all when it came to that. When travelling alone, it is extra important to be aware of your safety and thereby being well-read into the culture, laws, and the current situation in the country. To be as safe as possible, I researched a lot. I found a group on Facebook called *Svenskar i Tanzania* where I wrote a post about my trip, asking for advice in terms of accommodation in Stone Town (the capital of Zanzibar) and asking if there are other Swedish people there at the same time wanting to meet up. Luckily, I received a tip from a girl that had been in Zanzibar and Stone Town the semester before me also performing minor field studies, but from a different school. Through this group I also met other Swedish people in Zanzibar, and I can highly recommend reaching out there. Even though it is fantastic meeting the local people and making friends there, when travelling alone I found it nice having someone on site in the same situation to relate to one another and speaking your own language. It gave a sense of comfort from time to time. You can find the group via this link:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/581315448593487/?locale=sv_SE

On Zanzibar they speak Swahili but in general people also speak English. Thereby no language courses for preparation were necessary. However, I do recommend remembering some phrases in Swahili, it is a nice gesture and an easy way to both gain and show respect. Furthermore, there are a lot of diseases in Tanzania and on Zanzibar. I scheduled an appointment at *Vaccindirekt* to discuss with them what vaccinations needed and recommended for me. I suggest to anyone travelling there to do the same. You can find some recommended vaccines on the link below:

<https://vaccindirekt.se/vaccinering-infor-resan/afrika/tanzania/>

A visa is required to enter both Tanzania and Zanzibar. Depending on what project you do, different visas are suitable (depending on brought equipment etc). I applied for a tourist eVisa via this link: https://tanzania-eservices.org/zanzibar-arrivals/?gclid=CjwKCAjw4ZWkBhA4EiwAVJXwqStjcPuE_fNTG8Ws8Co_xA-uaRYVfCPX-36Rb-N7THfdLDB6YLirxoCXAEQAvD_BwE

It is possible arriving on Zanzibar without a visa before. They can issue one there which a lot of people do. However, I found it comfortable to have the process done before arrival and would highly recommend that. It took 2 days to receive the visa after applying. Further preparations I would recommend is to print every piece of important information before hands to have paper copies in case the phone or computer is lacking power. Electricity supply can be unreliable in the country. I also recommend bringing US dollars, I brought around 400. US dollars are accepted as currency for payment in addition to the local currency Tanzanian Shilling (which can only be exchanged or withdrawn on site).

Upon arrival

I arrived one week before the project started. It was nice having some time before starting the project to get familiar with the island. I stayed in Zanzibar for two consistent months, I found that to be enough time to both perform my project and explore Zanzibar. To get from the airport to the apartment where I stayed, I booked a taxi via my Airbnb host. I would recommend anyone to do the same since this is the safest way to ensure a good price and ride from the airport.

Financials

Zanzibar is in general less expensive than Sweden. However, I found it difficult finding midrange quality and prices on accommodation. In a lot of cases, it is either expensive and luxury or cheap with poor quality, finding an in-between was thereby not always easy yet not impossible. Food is cheaper than in Sweden, both groceries and eating out. There are a few supermarkets, but the assortment varied a lot from day to day. To save money, make sure to buy locally produced groceries. Imported food is expensive. Another tip is to buy groceries at the local market called Darajani. Here you must bargain the prices to not get fooled, do not hesitate to do so.

Accommodation

As previously mentioned, I found my accommodation through a girl that previously conducted minor field studies in Tanzania via another university in Sweden. The accommodation was an Airbnb in a friendly and safe area. I booked an apartment with shared kitchen on the third floor and was very pleased with my stay. In addition to the apartment, I also had access to a lounge area on the rooftop. The hostess provided me helpful information in terms of where to withdraw money, buy local SIM-cards etc. The hostess also helped arranging transfer from the airport and greeted me at the house when arriving. I paid around 6000 SEK per month during my stay. You can find the link to the accommodation on Airbnb here:

https://www.airbnb.se/rooms/17631548?source_impression_id=p3_1686491410_EZpVpwf97guCT%2BHQ



The view from my bedroom to the left and the view from the rooftop to the right

Project

My project was to identify the waste management systems and the flows of plastics on the island. Furthermore, I identified current challenges for the systems and identified future improvement areas. You can find my thesis in the Diva-portal: *The flows of plastics and its future on Zanzibar – A Minor Field Study*. I hope my project can be a foundation for further studies within the area covered. A day during my field studies varied a lot. I got practical experience via the company I collaborated with, Zanrec. Other than that, I went across the island to get as fair an overview as possible and interviewed people at hotels, shops, workers, and inhabitants of Zanzibar. My contact person was Justin, the CEO of Zanrec and he helped me in whatever way he could to make sure I collected all the information needed for my project. My results were not complete on site and thereby the results could not be presented during my stay. I shared my results with the organisation once they were clear via e-mail since they had little to no time for a virtual presentation.

Country

The people of Zanzibar are generally very friendly and nice. The religion on the island is Islam, and as a girl you cannot walk around in shorts and tank tops. I usually wore dresses covering my knees and shoulders, especially when in Stone Town, to show respect. It is not safe to walk around alone at night. When having to travel by night, make sure to go by tuktuk or taxi. Since poverty is a fact, from time to time you find people following you trying to sell different products. It is okay to say no and when doing so, be stubborn, otherwise you risk getting followed around. Use common sense and do not do anything you don't feel comfortable with, if doing so, there is nothing to worry about.

Leisure and social activities

Zanzibar is surrounded by water and thereby any sort of sports connected to water exists. In my spare time I went kitesurfing in Paje on the east coast, surfed, sailed, and snorkelled. Soccer is a big sport on the island, and I am sure one could find opportunities to practice around the island. There are a lot of restaurants in Stone Town and other sites around the island. Here are some of my tips on restaurant for lunch and dinner: The Beach House, Cape Town Fish Market, Luukman, Stone Town Café, Café Turquoise, The Silk Route, Emerson roof top, Archipelago Waterfront and Maru Maru. It was easy getting to know local people and a place I found good for socialising in the evenings in Stone Town was The Beach House.



Lunch at Emerson rooftop, breakfast at Stone Town Café, dinner at Luukman.

Sustainability

My project was connected to Agenda 2030 by identifying future improvement areas that could be implemented connected to the 12th goal of sustainable consumption and production. In my everyday life it was a challenge living sustainably and not compromising with my own safety. I always walked when the distance was under 5 km, but when travelling further than that or at night I went by tuktuk or taxi. I bought locally produced food to both decrease environmental impact from transportation and financial costs. When consuming water there is no other option than buying bottled water to be safe and stay healthy, a fact I could not compromise with even though I thereby contributed to the problem of plastics waste management. I always tried thinking through different possibilities and options to choose the safest and most sustainable option in any situation.

Other recommendations and observations

If in need of a taxi driver, contact Haji on WhatsApp. I went anywhere around the island with him during my stay and always felt safe.

Haji taxi - +255 776 514 920

If in need of a tuktuk driver nearby Stone Town, the driver Heri is highly recommended by me.

Heri tuktuk - +255 773 905 735

If you consider conducting your minor field studies on Zanzibar and have any questions, you are more than welcome to contact me via e-mail: ebranden@kth.se or via Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/brandenelizabeth98/>

I would be happy to help in all ways possible!