

Dear Friends and Family,
Karibu Sana – a warm welcome to Tanzania, Africa.

Every day the media tells us stories from all over the world; images and ideas are communicated that stick in our minds. Unfortunately these pictures are often wrong, or not complete. When I was in China I realised that so many people had an opinion about China, but many of them had it wrong. Only few foreign people actually understood the country. So here I am now in Africa. The questions I was asked before coming here concerned; HIV/Aids, robberies, kidnapping, ISIS, Boko Haram, Malaria, Dengue fever, poisonous snakes Ebola etc. So far I'm happy to say that I haven't encountered any of these issues at all. But what I have got to know is a place full of beauty. I am living on the slopes of the Kilimanjaro, 15 km away from the peak, surrounded by a magnificent tropical rain forest as well as banana and coffee plantations. I am here doing an exchange semester at the College of African Wildlife management, MWEKA. (I started studying environmental sciences at the Zurich University of applied science. I did my first year in Switzerland, then went to Norway for the first half of the 2nd year and now I am completing the 2nd year here in Tanzania. The 3rd and last year of my Bachelor I will complete in Switzerland).

Back to Tanzania, back to the place where the tarmacked road finishes and a dirt track starts which leads to Kilimanjaro, back to the place that I will call my home until August '15. The first week was really tough as I am the only white student and people just wouldn't stop staring at me. In the mean while it has become better. What makes home feel like home are the people surrounding you. All the people are really welcoming. With a couple of students I get on really well. The discussions we have about exploitation, about the reasons Europeans brought the church to Africa, about why most profitable products that earn the majority of the money are made outside Africa and about many more topics, I find very inspiring.

I have my own room here, which is good, even though it is opposite a small bar, which has incredible loud music all day and night. I even have my own little bathroom and I am now slowly getting used to only having running water there 20% of the time. There are 5 taps on the campus (for water irrigation) so the 700 students tend to use these on those occasions, as they work more frequently.



I miss cooking my own food, but that is okay. I go to the school canteen daily and have local meals for 1-2 CHF/USD.

So far, I am much enjoying university despite the fact, that I never quite know how late the lecturer will start (5mins to 90mins delays). Classes are held in a much freer form, for instance they don't use (or need) any notes or Power Points to present and nevertheless can keep talking and explaining in a very interesting & informative manner for over an hour. As most of the lecturers have been working in national parks facing poaching and illegal ivory trade, they are able to give us lots of examples and ways of solving problems. Here the practical approach is very important. We have been bird watching (picture) and in June we are going to national parks for a three weeks field work trip. Which means our class of 40 students will be camping in the bush with lions, buffalos, leopards, elephants, zebras, giraffes and hyenas walking around our tents.



What I am missing here are like-minded people who enjoy doing similar outdoor activities and who like going on weekend trips to visit different places. In China and Norway I found people who loved doing outdoor activities and apart from that, the infrastructure was extremely easy to use. Thus I was on the go as soon as I could manage to get away. However here I am having to adapt to the people, which means taking things much slower, no hurry; realising everything takes time and that is all right for the moment and to be honest I think the change and less stress won't harm me at all. I am sure I will manage to get some nice trips organized but I now realise that this will take time. Now I need to study Swahili to make communication outside of the college easier. Now also looking forward to my sister Barbara coming out to visit me.

I really enjoy the surrounding tropical rain forest and plantations. When I first arrived here the temperature was between 28 and 34°C. Now, as the rainy season has started it has cooled down to about 20 to 25°C. But as soon as the sun comes out it can easily reach 30°C. I am now trying to read the weather, coping with the really heavy rainfall and trying to learn about the environment I am living in.

My plan was to write this letter to you a little bit earlier, but due to daily electricity cuts (which can frustratingly last up to 4 days) and other problems with the internet. Everything has taken much longer

From Africa wishing you all the best!
Happy Easter
Peace - Christopher

