

DODOMA, TANZANIA

NYERERE HOUSE

JV Presence in Tanzania since 1995

Mailing Address

Jesuit Volunteers
c/o Jesuit Fathers
[JV's Name]
PO Box 1079
Dodoma, Tanzania

Volunteer Accompaniment

JVC Coordinator

William Poling (Maryknoll, 2005-06,'08,'09; Peace Corps, 2010-13)
wpoling@jesuitvolunteers.org

Local Formation Team

Fr. Jerome Manyahi, SJ
In-Country Coordinator
manyahisj@gmail.com

Fr. Buberwa Karongo, SJ
Headmaster – St. Peter Claver High School
buberwak@gmail.com



Overview

East Africa is the “motherland” of all of humanity; human and pre-hominid fossils dating from two million years ago have been found in Tanzania. Tanzania is an equatorial country with a tropical climate. It is 1.5 times the size of Texas. Since 1996, Dodoma has served as the capital of the United Republic of Tanzania. Dar es Salaam, on the coast, is Tanzania’s largest city (with 2.5 million people), and served as the political capital from independence until 1996.

Islam has been practiced along the Swahili coast since the 8th century; Arab slave traders brought the religion to the area. Christianity was introduced in the century after explorer Vasco de Gama arrived in 1498. Currently, over 60% of the country is Christian (primarily Catholic) and 35% is Muslim, though the island of Zanzibar is almost entirely Muslim. There are over 120 ethnic groups in Tanzania with about 10 major ethnic groups (no ethnic group comprises more than 10% of the population). Swahili is the language which unifies these groups and English is also an official language.

By the 1880s, Germany was declared to have a “sphere of influence” in the region, and Britain ruled the country from the 1910s until the mainland’s independence. Tanzania assumed its present form in 1964 after a merger between the mainland Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar, which had become independent the previous year.

Mainland Tanzania, almost uniquely in Africa, has undergone a series of political transitions – from colonial dependency to independent nation, from socialist state to free-market economy, from benevolent dictatorship to democracy – with little civil or ethnic unrest. Tanzania’s first president, Julius Nyerere, issued the 1967 Arusha Declaration, which called for self-reliance through the creation of cooperative farm villages and the nationalization of factories, plantations, banks and private companies. This socialist economic system was abandoned, however, by 1985, when Nyerere’s successor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi,

attempted to raise productivity and attract foreign investment and loans by dismantling government control of the economy.

Education is compulsory to age 15, though around 57% of children age 5-14 attend school. The economic mainstay is subsistence agriculture. Tanzania is also Africa's third-largest gold producer and the only known source of the gem Tanzanite. Tourism is an important revenue earner; Tanzania's attractions include Africa's highest mountain, Kilimanjaro, and wildlife-rich national parks such as the Serengeti.

History of Service in this Country

Past: Though Jesuits first arrived in East Africa in 1553, the 1960s saw a greater flow of Jesuits to the region. In 1961, Jesuits from Karnataka, India arrived in Mwanza, Tanzania. By 1975, Jesuits in Eastern Africa were from Britain, Canada, India, Malta and the U.S., and were involved in pastoral, spiritual, educational and formation ministries. They had already attracted local vocations and had been joined by men from Ethiopia and Tanzania since 1970. The Eastern Africa Province was formed in 1986 and consists of 210 Jesuits from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan and Uganda. JVC has been in Tanzania for over 10 years, primarily at Dar es Salaam. Moshi was established as a site for JVC in 2008 and closed in December 2012, primarily due to lack of Jesuit presence (support and ministries) in the area. Dodoma received their first JVs in 2010, and the site has been steadily growing since. JVC sent JVs to Kenya for several years, but it has been a long time since we have had a JVC community there.

Present: Currently, JVC has 7 JVs in Tanzania, who live in 2 JV communities in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, and serve at 3 worksites.

In Dodoma, the JVs live in a house owned by and located near the Airport Parish (website: kndege.org - page in Swahili). They share the house with volunteers from Germany and Britain who are part of an Ignatian-based program.

St. Peter Claver High School is a Jesuit boarding high school that opened in 2011. They currently have around 700 students with the hope to have 1,200 students in the coming years. For now, it serves mostly students with economic means though mission is to eventually serve more local students who are more economically marginalized. The principal is Fr. Ayaga, SJ and the school has 30 teaching staff. Website: www.stpeterclaverdodoma.org (see also vimeo.com/20355854).

Country Specific Resources

- [*Theology Brewed in an African Pot*](#) (2008), Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator, SJ. The current Provincial of East Africa, who supports JVC and knows the JVs well.
- *The Black Man's Burden* (1993), Basil Davidson. Davidson compares the optimism of Africans when they finally emerged from foreign rule in the 1950s with today's continuing state of crisis, which he blames, in part, on the colonial legacy
- *Petals of Blood* (1977), Ngugi P. A novel set in newly independent Kenya.
- *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Chinua Achebe. Examines colonialism and the aftermath by portraying the collision of African and European cultures in people's lives
- *Say You're One of Them* (2009), Uwem Akpan, SJ. A collection of five stories set in different countries of war-torn Africa written by a Nigerian Jesuit.
- *Non-Bourgeois Theology: An African Experience of Jesus* (1985), Joseph Donders. A survey of current African theological movements for a North American audience
- *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (2000), Joseph Healey, MM and Donald Sybertz, MM. Two missionaries share their experiences and approach to narrative theology in Africa.
- *Africa: A Biography of a Continent* (1999), John Reader. British writer and photojournalist examines Africa's history and evolution as a continent.
- *Eat the Rich* (1999), P.J. O'Rourke. A (funny) book on economics, with a chapter on Tanzania called *How to Make Nothing from Everything*. His point: lots of natural resources and little GDP.

- *The Flame Trees of Thika: Memories of an African Childhood* (1982), Elspeth Huxley. WWI-era view of East Africa through the eyes of a child.
- *Tanzania: My Country as I See It* (2011), Peter E. Temu. Focuses on development prospects and emphasizes that Tanzania is endowed with natural resources of all kinds. The author lays the blame for the country's underdevelopment on lack of education, poor leadership, and widespread corruption. Recommended by a current JV.
- *Corporal Punishment around the World (Global Crime and Justice)* (2012), Matthew Pate and Laurie A. Gould. Series of case studies on this practice and why and how it is practiced in some cultures. Has chapters on religion, the home, educational settings, and features Nigeria as a case study. Recommended by a current JV.
- *This Our Exile: A Spiritual Journey With the Refugees of East Africa* (1999), James Martin, SJ. An engaging account of a young American Jesuit's two years working with refugees in Nairobi, Kenya
- *They Came Back Singing: Finding God with the Refugees* (2008), Gary Martin, SJ. A chronicle of a Jesuit's six years in two refugee camps as priest and administrator which reveals not only the truly ghastly conditions in which people live and die, but also the spiritual strength that supports them.
- *The Shadow of the Sun* (2002) Ryszard Kapuscinski. Recommended for information about Africa as a whole just as colonialism was ending, including a chapter on Zanzibar and Tanzania.
- Video Series of PBS: Africa www.pbs.org/wnet/africa/about/index.html

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