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Post-Pre-Dissertation Travel Write-up

Objectives

First and foremost, I would like to express my utmost appreciation for the Scott Kloeck-Jenson funding that enabled me to engage in pre-dissertation research and travel this summer in Tanzania. It was a busy summer, rich with learning and opportunities to build both friendships and research relationships there.

I arrived in Tanzania at the beginning of June for language study at the Lutheran Junior Seminary in Morogoro, Tanzania, where I studied intensive advanced Kiswahili for 7 weeks. The Scott Kloeck-Jenson funding enabled me to both participate in this language study, for which I was only partly funded through Fulbright-Hays, as well as to remain in Tanzania for 3 weeks after the program ended in order to dedicate my time solely to my pre-dissertation research objectives as I had described them in my Spring application. My main objective for pre-dissertation travel during Summer 2003 was the development of contacts and relationships in the various research sites I have identified for my multi-sited ethnography. In addition I hoped to collect the necessary background information I need to write my dissertation proposal and other funding proposals during the 2003-2004 academic year. Specifically, my pre-dissertation travel aimed to:

- (1) select the site in which I will conduct my school-level research;
- (2) gather necessary background information on the educational, political, economic, and social context of that locality, both historically and in the present, without violating my student (not research) visa;
- (3) develop my contacts in educational policy and administration at the regional and national levels; and
- (4) update my information on the PEDP policy, its stage of implementation, and any preliminary evaluation of impacts.

Activities and Findings

During my language study in Morogoro I was fortunate to be located not far from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city and the seat of government. I made two visits to the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's most prestigious university with a large Faculty of Education. I met with several professors there, including Professor George Malekela, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, whom I have recently requested to be my University liaison and sponsor for my research clearance. I also scoured the bookstore for relevant publications and readings on education and history and purchased 12 books which will inform my research.

I also traveled to Bagamoyo during this period, where I renewed my contacts at the Agency for the Development of Educational Management (ADEM). These colleagues updated me on the current context of the primary school reform which I am investigating and also provided me with local contacts in each of the two regions, Singida and Mtwara, I planned to visit to explore their potential as research sites.

Finally, it was at the language school in Morogoro that I made some of my most important contacts for my site visits. Coincidentally, several of the language teachers I became close friends with, as well as the "host family" I was connected with, all came from Singida region, and also had links in the local education system there. An ethnographic

project for my language class became the perfect opportunity to learn more about the region. I interviewed four teachers and several family members to find out more about the region, the different groups of people who live there, their livelihoods and traditions, and the climate. This proved important context for my visit there in August.

In August, my language program ended and I left immediately for Singida. During my stay in Singida Town I met with both District and Regional Education officials, spent time with several local families who invited me into their homes, met with Peace Corps volunteers and other development/mission workers serving in the area to gain their perspective on the region, and also visited Singida Rural District, where I toured the town of Ikungi. In Ikungi I visited the primary and secondary school, met with the principal and several teachers, toured the health clinic and the new water initiative sponsored by a Japanese development organization, and spent time with a local family, who taught me to "piga mtama", or, thrash sorghum, one of Singida's main crops. It was through these visits and interactions that I became convinced that Singida is an ideal research site for my research. Because I have chosen it as such, I will include a more detailed description of it here.

Singida region is located in central Tanzania, isolated from both the coast and the network of national parks in the north and south and the resulting tourist industry and development efforts that those attract. It is populated mainly by agriculturalists and pastoralists from the WaNyaturu, WaNyaramba, WaMang'ati, WaNysanzu, WaGogo, and WaHadzabe ethnic groups. It is a semi-arid region known for its unique landscape which is dotted with salt-water lakes and giant rocks and for its chickens, onions, and honey which are marketed around the country. School enrollment in the region, particularly in the rural areas (outside of Singida Town), remains low, and a lack of resources and teachers is consistently problematic. One Ikungi teacher I met spoke of the challenges of teaching one of her primary school classes with 103 students, an impossibly large class size. Yet despite these challenges, dynamic leadership at both the primary and secondary school levels in Ikungi has procured national and international funding for projects such as school construction and a special program serving 17 blind students from the region. In addition, community efforts have secured Japanese funding and technical support for construction of infrastructure for a safe and reliable water supply. I anticipate that Ikungi's unique status as a rural location with direct international relationships, and its progressive agenda in the face of intense challenges in education make it a rich site in which to explore questions about the role of community participation in national education initiatives and school management.

My visit to Mtwara, after my visit to Singida, was not nearly so smooth nor so informative, which I attribute to my lack of contacts in the region, and, admittedly, on the fact that in my heart I had settled on Singida as my research site. I did have an extremely productive and informative meeting with a faculty member of the Mtwara Teacher Training College, who provided me with ample information on the status and struggles of education in the region. Aside from that experience though, I was not able to make the kinds of contacts in education that I had been able to forge in Singida.

Upon my return to Dar es Salaam, I followed up with another visit to the University of Dar es Salaam. I also visited the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) to renew my contacts there and to acquire information about the extensive process necessary for obtaining research permission in Tanzania.

Next Steps

This summer was invaluable for obtaining the kind of information I needed both to settle on a research site and to complete my proposals for departmental requirements and for funding. This semester I am completing my coursework for my Joint Ph.D. in Education Policy Studies and Anthropology, preparing for my upcoming exams in both departments, and applying for funding from the following organizations: Fulbright-IIE, Fulbright-Hays, the Social Science Research Council, the National Science Foundation, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation. I will also be completing my applications for Human Subjects approval here at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as well as applying for research clearance from COSTECH. I look forward to beginning my research in Tanzania in September 2004.