



# Documentation of Maasai Culture

Field Work September- December 2016

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# Introduction

The content of this report is the result of six weeks' field work in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Participant observation of day to day life, in- depth interviews and focus group discussions were held with the Maasai inhabitants with the aim of documenting the current lives and opinions of Maasai people that live there. Although often perceived as a traditional society, Maasai culture, like all culture, is dynamic and changing. The effects of globalisation, technology and governance are just as apparent in Maasai lives as they are elsewhere.

To understand and document Maasai culture in its current form, data was collected under four themes. The first report examines the current day to day life of a married Maasai woman. It shows how traditions, such a rigid gender roles are still adhered to, but also that life for some women has changed considerably, for example through access to education. The second report examines a significant Maasai ceremony, Org'esh, where Warriors transition to Elders and take on new responsibilities within the age- set system. The report evidences the importance of tradition to many Maasai in a constantly changing world. The third report examines the potential for sustainable cultural tourism, a possible way to improve the livelihoods of the Maasai and preserve traditions. However, such an opportunity is not without its challenges, as is discussed. Finally, the fourth report examines the challenge of a growing Maasai population in a protected area. The report examines the way Maasai are both threats to, and are threatened by, the World Heritage Status of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, and what solutions are possible to the tensions between environmentalists and pastoralists.

Hopefully, these reports will provide a snapshot of Maasai life in its current form, and provides a platform for some Maasai people to express their views. Although it could never hope to be comprehensive, the authors believe it provides insight into a unique, beautiful and changing culture.

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# A Day in the Life of a Maasai Woman

Field work: 12/10/ 2016- 26/11/2016 in Irkeepusi Village

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Report and Photographs by Jennifer Sharp

## Introduction

The responsibilities of Maasai society remain strongly gendered. Women are responsible for maintaining the home; including cooking and cleaning, collecting firewood and water, looking after children and building and repairing huts. Contrastingly, men are responsible for herding and protecting cattle, building 'kraals', or cattle pens, and contributing to larger decisions about the community through traditional political processes. There is very little overlap between the responsibilities of men and women and therefore, outside of sexual relationships and marriage, people spend the majority of their time with those of the same gender. The daily burden of domestic duties for women takes up a considerable amount of time in the day and while men appear to have considerable time for relaxation and socialising, women are rarely idle.

This report will detail the daily duties of a married Maasai woman. Young Maasai girls help with domestic chores throughout their lives, and therefore many of the duties of a married Maasai woman are also undertaken by girls and women of all ages. The significant difference is the responsibility attached to a married Maasai woman, who must take control to ensure domestic duties are completed, whereas girls have significantly more freedom.

This report will first detail the methods of research, undertaken in Ngorongoro. It will then examine the nature of marriage in Maasai society, particularly the significance of polygamy. The report will then explore the daily responsibilities of a married Maasai woman, starting in the morning and progressing through the day. Other traditional roles for women will then be briefly explored, such as traditional birth attendants, or 'Ngaribas', who also often perform circumcision ceremonies. Finally, the report will examine the changes in the duties of married Maasai women over recent decades, including opportunities for new roles in the community, such as within local NGOs, or as teachers.

Ultimately, this report concludes that although responsibilities in Maasai society remain strongly segregated by gender, and women still often occupy a largely subordinate position, no culture is static, and new opportunities for women are being created, both within and outside of marriages.

## Methodology

This report is based on six weeks of anthropological field work in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA). Interviews were conducted with many women and men in the area regarding the duties of a married Maasai woman. Focus groups with women were also conducted in informal settings, such as helping to prepare food. A great deal of participant observation was undertaken during the research period, including going to collect firewood and water, assisting to thatch a roof, preparing food and tea and learning to make traditional beaded items. Many informal conversations were held during this time. Although the vast majority of research was conducted in one village around the North West rim of the crater, the duties of women presented are relatively general and are likely to apply to other Maasai communities in other areas of Tanzania.

## Maasai Marriage

Most Maasai marriages are arranged by parents, sometimes when both children are still young. The family who provide a girl for her husband will receive cows and other animals in return, and therefore the family would wish to arrange marriage to a family that can afford to provide a good bride price. It is also a way of ensuring that a young impressionable girl does not choose a bad husband for herself (Respondent P, 2016). The prevalence of arranged marriages is decreasing with the rise of education, as more young adults wish to choose their own partner. However, arranged marriages remain the norm, and children often fear the negative consequences of refusing their parent's choice of spouse, for example the possibility of being cursed (Respondent O, 2016).

Before marriage, the vast majority of women undergo a circumcision ceremony, also known as female genital cutting. This ceremony, although illegal, symbolises a transition from girlhood to womanhood, and availability for marriage. Circumcision would traditionally take place in a girl's early teen years, although due to the current illegality of the practice, it often takes place earlier in childhood to avoid detection (Winterbottom et al, 2009). Nonetheless, circumcision remains an important precursor to marriage. Marriage itself may take place when a girl is in her early to mid-teenage years. However, once again, the increasing prevalence of education means that some women remain unmarried until their twenties.

Maasai society is polygamous, meaning one man can have many wives. This means that a girl may be marrying a man similar to her own age, who has yet to be married, or a man considerably older, who has married before. Women generally believed that having more than one wife in a household was a benefit to them, as it provided companionship, and someone to help with household chores (Respondent P, 2016). The first wife traditionally holds more status in the home, and is responsible for teaching any new wives the best way to take up their responsibilities and care for their family.

Maasai society is strongly patriarchal, and men have authority over their wives and children. This means that the final decisions on selling cattle, arranging marriages and other important family decisions remain in the hands of men (Respondent S, 2016). Women are also sometimes limited in their personal freedoms, and must ask their husband's permission to venture into town, or walk long distances to visit relatives or friends. As with all cultures, however, marital relationships vary significantly, and some women hold relatively high levels of autonomy. As one woman stated, 'my husband does not beat me, so I can go where I want' (Respondent E, 2016).

Contrastingly, sexual autonomy is far greater in Maasai marriage, and adultery is considered an inevitable aspect of any marriage (Respondent K, 2016). Maasai men are divided into age sets, and wives are considered to correspond to their husband's age set. Members of the same age set are permitted to engage in sexual activity with one another's wives, and wives are permitted to choose sexual partners outside their marriage provided they are not in a lower age set than their husband. However, as many wives are considerably younger than their husbands, sexual activity with men in a younger age set is also common (Llewellyn Davies, 1974, Respondent L, 2016). If caught, however, the woman's and the young man's family will be forced to pay some form of compensation to her husband's family to make up for any wrongdoing.

It is acknowledged that married Maasai women have a workload that far exceeds that of married men, 'they remain back home, clean their houses, cooking, looking after young babies, fetching water' (Respondent A). The responsibilities listed below are those undertaken by a Maasai woman in a typical day. As there may be more than one wife in each household, the women share the workload between them, and may delegate tasks to children and unmarried women in the homestead.

## Waking Up and Milking Cattle

A woman will start her day early in the morning, usually before sunrise. Women will ensure the home is clean, and then prepare the fire for cooking breakfast (Fig 1).



*Figure 1*

After cleaning a calabash using ash from the fire, women will go to the Kraal to milk the cows (Fig 2). If there are young calves, they are usually kept inside overnight in a purpose built room inside the hut, to protect them from predators and cold weather. The women will therefore also bring the calves into the kraal to feed from their mothers.



*Figure 2*

Following milking, the women prepare some porridge or tea for the children, and possibly for any young boys or warriors who are about to go herding. If there is not enough milk to go around, the boys may well go out herding without food, only to eat later in the evening. After cooking, the women must once again ensure the home is kept tidy, and clean up all the pots and pans using ash.

After the cows are taken out to graze for the day, women must attend to their other responsibilities.

## Collecting Water

During the rainy season in Ngorongoro, collecting water is a relatively easy task, as streams flow throughout the conservation area, and finding a water source is rarely a problem. During the dry season, however, the streams dry up and women are forced to walk longer distances. Despite this, collecting water is quite a social task, and women often go in groups to collect water and wash clothes while chatting and enjoying each other's company (fig 3). If a married woman is too busy to collect water herself, she will send some younger female family members to collect for her. As these younger women have fewer responsibilities, they may spend some time socialising and joking at the water hole before carrying their water back home.

*Figure 3*





*Figure 4*

The women will use a small tin mug to scoop water into large plastic containers. Originally, women used calabashes to carry water, but the cheap price and convenience of plastic containers has made them far more common.

As is visible in Fig 4, the water may be dirty and polluted with animal waste, but is always boiled before drinking or eating. Respondents all claimed that access to wells or other water sources was not a priority, as all water must be boiled before consuming regardless, and the social aspect of collecting water means it is not considered an unpleasant task.

Following collection, the plastic containers of water, holding up to 25 litres, are tied to the women's back using a 'shuka' or colourful piece of cloth and carried back to the home for washing, cooking and drinking (fig 5).



*Figure 5*

## Collecting Firewood

Fires are usually made in the morning and evening in each home, and therefore it is important to keep stores of firewood replenished. Firewood is taken from the surrounding trees and bushes. The



women do not cut down whole trees, but use machetes to remove branches that can be easily carried back home (Fig 6).

If there are forests nearby, women may simply gather up small branches as and when they need them. However, for those homes further away from the forest, women will collect large bundles and use straps of leather to tie them together and around their shoulders to carry them home. Again, this may require carrying a heavy load for a long distance.

## Building and Repairing 'Inkajjik' or Huts

Maasai huts, or 'Inkajjik' are made of a basic structure created by wooden posts fixed in the ground. These are filled with smaller branches and coated in cow dung, often mixed with water, mud, urine or ash. Roofs are also coated in cow dung and then thatched using dried grass. In previous generations, when the Maasai were fully nomadic, houses would only be built to last for a few months until the village moved to find better grazing grounds for cattle. The Maasai today are largely sedentarised, particularly in Ngorongoro, as a stable home allows children to attend school and remain close to healthcare facilities. Houses must therefore be routinely repaired in order to survive each rainy season. This means re-thatching the roof and applying new cow dung to the walls

and floor. As the houses are not built to last a long time, new huts must also be built regularly, particularly when a newly married couple is getting ready to start a family (Fig 7).



**Figure 7**

Building and repairing houses is therefore also added to the list of a married woman's daily tasks. Women are responsible for their own hut, but will often work together to help build new structures in the boma, or family settlement. The house must be watertight before the rainy season arrives, when adding a new coat of cow dung to fix a leak becomes much harder.

## Traditional Beadwork

Any spare time during the day is often taken up making traditional beaded items. During ceremonies, Maasai women wear beaded necklaces, earrings, bangles and anklets (Fig 8). Beads are also used to decorate ceremonial staffs or calabashes. Beaded jewellery may be made as gifts for female friends, relatives or other significant people; for example a girl may make jewellery for a boyfriend's mother.

Beadwork is usually done in the afternoon, when chores are complete but the men have still not returned from herding. It is also a social activity, as women can sit together to work whilst watching younger children. It is, however, important only to work for a few hours a day, as the detailed work can put strain on women's eyes in the long term.



**Figure  
8**

Today, women can make a small income by selling beaded jewellery and other items to tourists through 'cultural bomas,' or villages that are purpose built for tourists to learn about Maasai culture. The women make traditional items, but also small beaded animals, or more modern jewellery (fig 9). Traditionally, Maasai culture does not permit women to own property except through her male relatives. As use of money has become increasingly necessary, men still retain almost all capital and hold control over spending decisions in the family home. Selling beadwork is one way for women to have access to capital that is completely their own.

Figure 9



## Cooking

As the evening approaches, the men will bring the cattle back from grazing. Women relight the fire, and perhaps prepare some tea. Maasai eat late in the evening, around 8 or 9pm. Many people believe that Maasai people today only eat meat, blood and milk but in reality, cows are now too valuable to eat beef for each meal. Most Maasai will eat ugali, a thick porridge made from millet flour (fig 10) or rice with beans, cabbage and other vegetables as their staple. These are bought in town, as farming is not permitted inside the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, but Maasai in other areas may have smallholdings. Slaughtering animals is saved for special occasions. All the food is prepared over the fire, and tasks such as chopping are often delegated to younger girls. After dinner, women will usually put children to bed before themselves.



**Figure 10**

## Childcare

Throughout the day, a Maasai woman will be responsible for caring for her own children and the children of other family members. In Maasai culture, it is reasonably common for a young child to live away from her parents with another family. This may be because of practical reasons, such as ease of access to healthcare or education, or simply because a relative feels a strong connection to the child of a sister or niece. Older women in particular, whose children have grown up, may take in a younger child for companionship and to assist younger women. All daily chores are completed whilst making sure young children are safe and happy (Fig 11).



Figure 11

## Traditional Birth Attendants or 'Ngariba'

In addition to daily chores, another significant role a married woman may undertake in her community is that of a traditional birth attendant. With limited access to healthcare facilities, these women provide a vital service in assisting women throughout their pregnancy and delivery. They may also be the woman who performs female circumcision.

The skills are passed down orally, and considerable years of watching and training with older birth attendants must be undertaken before any woman is allowed to assist with a birth personally. Although the skills are often passed down through families, any interested woman can learn the skills of a birth attendant if she finds a willing trainer. Midwives use the training to ensure women are emotionally prepared for the stress of delivering a baby. As one woman claimed, 'those young girls, they sometimes start to cry before helping pregnant women!' (Respondent T, 2016).

A birth attendant will visit a pregnant woman from early on in their pregnancy. As some Maasai mothers are very young, it is the responsibility of the birth attendant to ensure she is aware of all the changes that will take place in her body. They also advise pregnant women on nutrition and taking rest from their daily chores. The birth attendant will provide emotional reassurance to those

nervous about motherhood, and will know massages to assist with any of the uncomfortable aspects of pregnancy.

During delivery, a birth attendant will distract a mother with stories and reassure her, saying 'you are safe, you will deliver well' (Respondent T, 2016). They boil water to sterilise the area and use massage to ensure the baby is in the correct position for delivery. If cutting is necessary, the birth attendant is responsible for making the decision to do so.

Finally, following delivery, the birth attendant will advise the mother on nutrition for herself, and assist in the early days of breastfeeding. Following delivery, a Maasai mother must spend several months indoors with her new baby, and refrain from her daily chores. This is a welcome break for Maasai women, and the birth attendant often checks to see if she is getting the appropriate rest (Respondent T, 2016). Although lacking medical training, traditional birth attendants have helped many mothers and children in areas where health services are lacking.

A Birth Attendant is valued as a highly skilled and respected member of the community. Although not paid for her role, she will regularly receive gifts, such as meat or animals, as gratitude for her work. Furthermore, many birth attendants claim that successfully caring for so many women and children has given them more self confidence, including in their marital relationships, and a voice in the community that is significant compared to that of other women (Respondent T, 2016).

## Changes in Gender Roles: The Impact of Education

Despite the clear influence of tradition on the roles of men and women in Maasai society, several significant changes are taking place. All respondents agreed that the biggest driver of change was education. For Maasai, education rates are lower the national average; dropout rates are higher, pass rates are lower and the number of people to pass into higher education and training are small. Girls face particular barriers to education, such as a reluctance to send girls walking long distances from home due to the danger of wild animals. Girls are also denied education due to early marriage and female circumcision or due to early pregnancy as a result of high levels of sexual activity at a young age, and little knowledge of safe sex. In addition, families are wary of educating girls, as it is believed educated women may refuse arranged marriages, and deny the family access to their bride price, 'when I educate my ladies, they will want to choose their husbands' (Respondent E, 2016).

However, attitudes to education are slowly changing, as those Maasai who have access to employment and prosperity through education are visible in the community. Olekambainei (2013) found that attitudes towards education had improved from the belief education was a system damaging Maasai tradition, to the belief it is an opportunity for a more prosperous future. This has also extended to women, as an increasing number of female role models, such as teachers, exemplify the benefits of educating women. One respondent claimed 'it is not easy, but it is changing' (Respondent D, 2016). The number of girls attending school is increasing (Olekambainei, 2013, Fig 12).



Figure 12

An educated young woman will be more likely to choose her own husband, and this is widely accepted in the Maasai community (Archambault, 2011). An older female respondent claimed 'an educated woman will choose a good educated man and they will make decisions in partnership' (Respondent K, 2016). Therefore, an educated woman will have more power even if they choose to remain a homemaker. Some respondents claimed that, whilst some men were still wary about educating their daughters, some were more wary of being forced to pay back cattle if their daughter refused an arranged marriage and therefore waited until the daughter was old enough to make her own decisions. Furthermore, if an educated woman has access to her own income, through employment, then she would have more say over family decisions. Although jobs for women in Ngorongoro are limited, some women worked as primary or kindergarten teachers, and others went outside of the region to find an income. Respondents who worked claimed their jobs gave them a sense of confidence that enabled them to be more assertive in other aspects of their life. Other women claimed similar empowerment from participating in the Maasai Pastoral Council, where

female members are mandatory, or taking on roles in women's community based organisations. These new opportunities have made women more visible as decision makers and figureheads within the community.

Finally, many respondents felt these changes had a small, but significant, impact on Maasai marital relationships. Older women claimed that within their lifetime, women were increasingly consulted regarding decisions of the household. Although men usually retained the final say, women would be asked their opinions on selling and buying cattle and on the marriages of their children, particularly daughters. Overall, older women said that the 'dominance' of men over women, although still present, had transformed into less complete form of power. This could also be seen in the ability of widows to retain their husband's property after his death, rather than it immediately passing to male children (Respondent K, 2016).

## Conclusion

Ultimately, the majority of Maasai women marry a man of their parent's choice, and spend their lives completing the tasks outlined above. According to Maasai tradition, the role of a woman is to care for her family, and look after the home. This is a role that gives many women pride and satisfaction, and creates close relationships with the female friends and relatives they work with every day. However, a woman's role also renders her subordinate to men, who are responsible for making decisions on behalf of their family and the wider community. This means that women's interests could be excluded from wider community level decisions. In addition, a woman's responsibility to her children and exclusion from employment opportunities may render her more vulnerable to poverty or catastrophe. This is particularly true if those a woman depends on for income are unable, or unwilling, to provide for her any longer.

However, despite these traditions, gender roles are never static, and change can be seen in Maasai society. The influence of education, technology and other aspects of the wider world are impacting every aspect of Maasai life, including gender roles. Beliefs about gender are constantly changing, and appearing to give women more power. It will be important to monitor these changes as they progress.

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# Orng'esher Ceremony and Rituals

Field work: 12/10/ 2016- 26/11/2016 in Irkeepusi Village

Research by Jennifer Sharp and Laangakwa Twati

Report by Laangakwa Twati

## Introduction and Background

This section underscores the Orng'esher ritual practice among the Kisongo Maasai, specifically Korianga cohort. Although Orng'esher is dubbed as a vital element of intangible cultural heritage due to its copious symbolic significance, there is a scant literature about it. The role of this section is therefore to offer a narrative of the process of Orng'esher rituals from the perspective of a twofold participant. Partly as a member of the graduating Korianga age-set who went through the initiation from its onset to the end and partly as a sociologist and anthropologist who approaches the practice from an emic perspective.

I start by giving a synopsis of Maasai age-set processes. This is crucial due to fact that, Orng'esher is the last process within the age-set initiation ceremonies, and plays a crucial role within the entire process. The next part ventures into a deep narrative of Orng'esher process and some practical observations and experiences; the selection of Oloosurutya, the Osupuki and Olkonerei separate camps, the camp of hairs, the hill of irmorwak/elders, Engang Sinyati/Orng'sherr, and Orng'esherr ceremony itself. The next part recounts the *Ingai* and *Ingiri* rituals consecutively as the two main corresponding rituals after Orng'esher ceremony.

## The Beginning of the Age Set

The age grade begins when the community sees that boys have grown up enough to assume the responsibilities of warriors. At this stage all senior boys have to be circumcised. However, there are several processes to be completed before circumcision. Boys have to choose their own leader called (**Alaigwanani**) the sole leader of the age set to lead the age group for his entire life and then embark into a pre-circumcision ceremony called **enkipaata**. In this ceremony therefore patrons (**menyelayok**) are chosen to lead and advise the new age grade accordingly. Patrons hold this position for life and must be respected by all members of that age set. The pre-circumcision ceremony

(Enkipaata) is normally organized by the fathers of the new-age set, Patrons included. The organizers have to choose a special site in the forest where boys can spend a night before the ceremony. Such a place must be a special dam, suitable for that particular age set depending on the instructions of the elders. During the peak of the ceremony all boys can dress in nice clothing, decorate them with colorful beading and are permitted to dance non-stop throughout the day. The main significance of this ceremony is the transition into a new age-set. This new age set must be given its own name in this ceremony. A few months after the ceremony, boys are ready to be circumcised.

Boys have to undergo the circumcision ceremony individually in their respective homesteads. Indeed boy's circumcision is a serious social practice in the Maasai community and no one is expected to escape from it. However, two days before circumcision, two important procedures must be followed, first is what they call Engitupukunoto ritual in which a ram must be slaughtered by mothers of the initiates. In the evening a boy has to be shaved, begin wearing black clothes and 'armarisian' and is then taken outside by his close relative to look and catch little grasshoppers. The catching and killing of little grasshoppers by using *Inkai* (a small piece of a chopped stick signifying an arrow and the small bow) symbolize that the boy is required to start hunting dangerous animals and hold the responsibility as an aspiring community soldier and scout.

The next day, while family members are preparing for the upcoming ceremony, boys have to be taken to the forest by a group of junior warriors to collect olive branches (Olorien) to be planted next to the hut of the initiate's mother. The tree symbolizes that a boy has been circumcised in that boma (homestead).

On the morning of the next day, boys have to undergo the practice of circumcision. A few minutes before the operation starts, boys must stand outside in the cold weather and receive a cold shower to cleanse themselves of past sins of the boyhood. As he moves towards the location of the operation, his friends, age mates and male members of the family shout encouragement, along with nasty looks and sometimes threats to make the boy angry. This is so he can tolerate the operation with courage, because the most crucial aspect of the practice is to measure the bravery of someone who will soon assume a role of a warrior and other paramount activities in the community (Ole Saitoti, 1986). Usually circumcision takes place shortly in the morning before sunrise and the operation must be performed by a qualified man called **Alamuratani** with many years of experience. One is not expected to budge, must not move a muscle or even blink but must face only one direction until the operation is complete. The slightest movement on the part of the body will mean he is a coward, incompetent and unworthy

to be a Maasai warrior. After the operation is successfully completed the boy will receive gifts of livestock from his parents, relatives and friends.

The newly circumcised boys usually wear black cloak, paint their faces with white chalk and are required to decorate their headdresses called '**armarisian**' with all kinds of colorful birds they have killed. They have to hunt birds, teasing girls by shooting them with wax blunt arrows, dancing and visiting Bomas where other boys are being circumcised and are free to go anywhere they want under condition that wherever they go they must be treated well. After four months or so the young circumcised boys must have their heads shaved, discard the black cloaks and bird headdresses and embark as newly shaven warriors, called **Irbanot**. In this stage they must be given traditional protection weapons like sticks, clubs, machetes and spears. They must take all roles played by warriors in the community such as protecting the community and the livestock, moving with cattle seasonally searching for suffice pastures, looking for stolen and lost livestock, engaging in collective community activities such as digging communal wells and taking active role in community events like ceremonies.

The age set is recruited within a span of 6 to 7 years. Those senior boys who have been circumcised for the first and the second year of the recruitment process have to later form a rank of senior warriors called '**Ilchangen-opirr and/or irmorijio**' while the rest hold a rank of junior warriors (**Irbanot**). These hierarchies develop a chain of command within this armed group in the community of which the junior warriors must completely be subordinate to their superior until **eunoto** ceremony. Before the commencement of the ceremony one member of the age-set is pointed to lead his fellow throughout the initiation ceremony. This leader (**Olaunoni**), under the coaching of fire stick elders and help from his age-mates, plant an olive tree, **Oloirien**, at the mid of the ritual enclosure (**Osingira**). The planting of the tree symbolizes the planting of the residing age-set to protect the community (Ndagala, 2015:23). While the ranks still prevail after Eunoto ceremony, junior warriors are no longer expected to be submissive as it was before. They can have right to decide and of course do whatever they want without any interference from their superior.

**Eunoto** ceremony permits both ranks of warriors (junior and senior) to marry, engages them in the decision-making processes in the community and prepares them to become future fathers. The initiates must choose a site where the famous warrior's camp known as **Emanyata** will be built. Several camps must be constructed in different localities but the main camp has to be set up in place called **Mukulat** in the foot of Munduli Mountain in Arusha. The main camp is inhabited by the resident of that place but also receives representative of the initiates from all other districts and region of the Maasai land (**Illoshon**). During the peak of the ceremony, a single Boma will be chosen for the event to

take place, where each graduating warrior must then have his head shaved by his mother. After the Eunoto Ceremony, the residing warriors stay for about 10 years of community service before they're initiated into Orng'eshger ceremony.

## The Process of Orng'eshger Rituals

Orng'eshger is a noteworthy event in the Maasai traditional rites of passage. Among other things the occasion marks the culmination of the existing warriors/Murrans and the consequent valediction of the same towards junior eldership. This process is an intricate network of multiple practices and attracts serious attention within the Maasai community and explicitly to the graduating cohort (In this case Korianga, the current graduating initiates).

As earmarked earlier on, the researcher was ardent from the very beginning of this process since the year 2016. The process began with preliminary ritual site mapping and spiritual meditation from among the spokesmen, patrons and diviners of the Korianga age-set such as *Loomenye-Ilayok*, *Oloibonok* and *Ilaigwanak*. This substantial exertion is an attempt to zoom the entire process from the perspective of patrons and cohort's diviners for the foreseen practice. This is accompanied with the selection of key leaders who will be responsible in safeguarding and leading the Korianga age set into a smooth graduation.

***Oloosurutya:*** When the Orng'eshger is about to take off, a selection of a important leaders call Oloosurutya, whose core function is "to head his age mates into unknown realm of elder hood and shoulder all the dangers on their behalf" (Ndagala, 2015). It has been noted that the selection of this leader is intermittent and with a singular honor he is lent as a sacrifice for entire age-set. One of the key informants disclosed that the Oloosurutya is expected to die just soon after the graduation process as a martyr to all vices regarding the Korianga age-set. Due to the delicacy of this position, however, you rarely find someone readily volunteering to be the Oloosurutya. A wealthy and prominent committee of patrons, spokesmen, seer and seniors are commissioned to screen, search and grab a person to suit the position. After the identification is made, the person is grabbed and some crucial type of grasses known as Isurutya is affixed on him as an investiture to Oloosurutya (Him of Hearings).

***Osupuki and Olkonerei separate camps:*** Normally the process towards orng'eshger involves a series of preliminary rituals practices. After the selection of Oloosurutya, a symbolic leader for the Orng'eshger ritual, members of the Maasai community from both the North (Osupuki) and south (Olkonerei)

establish separate initial camps '*Emanyat*' at a place called *olkolili*, a few kilometres from the Hill of Elders.

***Engang Oo'lpapit/Oo'ltaikan:*** After two months or so, depending on the pronouncement by age-set diviner (*Oloiboni*), the groups move close to the hill to the place called *Noondulugum*. Here the two groups set up one camp known as *enkangoo'rpapit* (camp of the hair). Twenty nine huts are made around a cattle kraal. The mixture of the two dominant age-sets camps from among the Maasai community, north and south, symbolizes a sense of cohesion and solidarity of the Maasai people. An added symbolic function is that *Oloosurutiya* join the groups to lead a delegation of ritual shaving and twenty warriors are shaved starting with their leader. The warriors in the camp of the hair are left until the ninth day after the ritual shaving, then move to the last destination, called *Enkang Orng'esherr* very close to the hill of elders.

**Enkang Sinyati/Orng'esherr (at Endoinyo Oo'Imorwak, The hill of elders):**

*Endoinyo Oo'rmorwak* (the hill of elders) marks the last stage of the *Orng'esherr* initiation process. This is a sacred spot for the Maasai, the area surrounding the hill of elders is characterized to be a graveyard of a Maasai ancestor (namely the pioneer of the earth, *Naiterukop*). In this spectacular hill, the *Enkang Sinyati/Orng'esherr* is made. Normally the hill is found in-between the *Mount Kilimanjaro (Oldoinyo Oiborr, White Mountain)* and *Mount Meru (Oldoinyorok, Black Mountain)*. The existence of these two physical structures is of great symbolic and significance to the Maasai *Orng'esherr* initiation (*Ndagala, 2015*). It is symbolic due to the colors of the dual opposition of Maasai age-set system, the right (white *Mount Kilimanjaro*) and the left (black, *Mount Meru*).

When the site is chosen by (*Ilaigwanak*) and the Patrons, a protective ritual is performed aimed at asking God to protect the area from evil. Thereafter, *Enkang Orng'esherr* is built on the southern side a few meters away from the hill of elders on the condition that the site must have or at least be very close to an African fig tree (*Oreteti*). This tree is of paramount importance for ceremonial practices in the Maasai community as it connotes rich symbolism. Warriors work together to cut trees and bring thorny acacia bush to build the outer fence, the enclosure and the houses in collaboration with women who have been selected to go to *Emanyata*. Meanwhile, 29 warriors are sent to the hill to collect special wood to build a great house (*Osingira*) to accommodate *Oloosurutiya* and his ritual family until the end of the ceremony. The required woods are; *Osupukiai, oloirien, and Osinandei*. Local people argue that the construction of the *Osingira* must be completed in a single day because *Oloosurutiya*

and his ritual family are not allowed to stay in other houses. In the same day, 29 warriors are sent to the hill to uproot Oloirien tree (*Olea Chrsohylla*) and bring it to the ceremonial Manyata.

Following the completion of the great house, 29 initiates, guided by Patrons, are sent to the hill to make fire using Endoole and Orpiron (a piece of cedar tree *Altarakwai* and a thin branch of fig tree *Oreteti*). When the fire is visible on the hill another fire is made in the centre of the kraal with other elders using the same type of firesticks. Then the initiates with their patrons are supposed to descend using the different route and are not supposed to look back both on ascent and descent. When they arrive at the Emanyata, the Oloirien tree that has been uprooted is put on fire in the centre of the kraal to burn until morning. Not even single branch or a leaf is left out. Therefore to ensure that the tree is completely burnt out, warriors have to continue dancing throughout the night in order to push the tree into fire. All these processes have significant symbols to this graduating age-set. As specified by Ndagala (2015), *“ By being led down the Hill through a different route after lighting a fire on top, the age set members are being instructed to take a different path as adults or junior elders from the one they took before. By not being allowed to look back they are instructed never to turn back to the action of moranhood. The Oloirien tree which is uprooted from the hill and later burnt in the centre of the camp represents the tree ‘planted’ by the Alaunoni during Eunoto ceremony and symbolizes the age set. Having grown through the years to the peak of that age grade, the age set is uprooted and burnt completely to ensure its removal from that age grade as warriors. The ritual symbolizes the end of the age set reign as warriors”*.

### ***The structure of Enkang Sinyati***

The great ceremonial Manyata has forty nine houses and nine gates in total. There are twenty four houses on the right side and another twenty four on the left side of the enclosure. The great house ‘Osingira’ is also built on the right and its entrance must face the Hill of elders. Osingira is occupied by the symbolic father of initiates (Oloosurutiya) a symbolic mother of the age set ( a young girl) and one warrior who serves the ritual family. The great house ‘Osingira’ must be surrounded by the heads of cows slaughtered at Enkang Sinyati.

The great ceremony starts in the evening of the first day by (1) welcoming Oloiboni inside of the sacred camp ‘*Enkang Sinyati*’, (2) bringing bamboo pieces inside and (3) bringing the ceremonial bull in the center of Emanyata in the evening of the first day and (4) Welcoming an elder from Ngorongoro who performs the ritual suffocation of the ceremonial bull. When all these are done, dancing and singing begins right at evening time and goes on throughout the night. The Ceremonial Ox is also being

fed with honey local beer to make him calm. The ceremonial Ox must be from a wealthy family and it must have the required color to suit the ritual as per diviner instructions.

On the following morning the ceremony begins as early as possible. While waiting for Oloboini and Oloosurutiya to come out, singing and dancing continues surrounding the ceremonial bull in a special enclosure called '*Olale Lo-sinnigira*'. Immediately after the diviner and Oloosurutiya appeared the protective ritual blessing is performed by elders. After the blessing women are allowed to bring the leaves in the enclosure where the bull has to be killed. Warriors then collaborate to lay down the drunken bull pointing at the right side. Then, an elder from Ingidongi clan in Ngorongoro kills the bull by suffocating using the hide skirt called '*Orkila*'. The pendulous skin under the neck of the Ox is carefully curved out and the jugular vein is cut to allow the blood to come through onto the neck skin. Honey beer is immediately added in the blood and then warriors, lead by Oloosurutiya and spokesmen, must drink the ritual drink one after another. After all the warriors finish this ritual drinking of blood the bull is skinned while the warriors are asked to go out of Emanyata for the meeting. The seniors are responsible for making further arrangements and the roasting of the ritual bull on the meat rack named '*Orng'eshher*'.

In the meeting, spokesmen and patrons are the key informants and the initiates are the audience. The main message to be given to the graduates is that they have to abandon their roles as warriors and instead assumes new instructed roles of elders in the community. They are also asked not to make reckless decisions but rather take time to think and reflect and seek whatever necessary opinion from their seniors. Importantly, they instill a sense of solidarity among the members of graduating age set and to their senior counterparts. Following the completion of the meeting, the initiates go back to the Camp to have meat and drink local beer made of honey. In the middle of the day *Oloosurutiya*, Patrons and the spokesmen and few warriors go to *Oloiboni* to receive the pieces of bamboo telling them that '*they may thereafter join elders using the tobacco container'orkidong*' (*Pl. Irkidong'i*). The rest of other warriors lineup depending on the localities they came from, waiting for their representatives to bring them bamboo pieces. These containers are to be decorated with beads and worn around the neck in the upcoming initiation ceremonies. However, for that day, the pieces of bamboo are well sealed with African fig tree rope (*oreteti*) and hung around the neck to symbolize a further step into adulthood.

After all the warriors get pieces of bamboo, their representatives (patrons and Spokesmen) go back to *Oloiboni* to receive finger-rings called *Orkerreri* (*Pl. irkerrerin*) made from the bull underbelly-skin, which every participating initiate must receive. In the evening, all initiates must gather outside the

kraal to receive a new name and the elders offer the last blessing. Thereafter dancing and singing continues while those who are coming from far places may leave the sacred camp and return to their respective localities.

## Ingai

As soon as a team of representatives arrives from the hill of elders another big feast is immediately held in their respective localities to welcome the team popularly known as Alamal. When "Alamal" arrives, they must be welcomed by all the people and thereafter a ritual blessing must be performed by a group of chosen elders before heading into a special boma where the event takes place. This ceremony involves all initiates, their wives, elders and the mothers of the initiates. This ceremony is called **Ingai**, meaning that warriors must hand all traditional weapons like machetes, clubs, sticks, and so forth to their wives on a temporary basis. All the items collected from the retiring age set must be gathered together on a special cow-hide in the centre of the kraal. Then a group of selected elders bring a mixture of butter milk, red oak and honey and have all items smeared. When all is done, the items must be given back to the owners. Only the faithful women of the graduating age set, who did not have sexual relation with the upcoming age set, can take their husbands weapons. Any woman who has committed adultery is not allowed to take part in the event as to do so is considered a great taboo. Those who committed adultery, and therefore do not attend the ceremony must receive a sanction.

When a woman knows that she cannot participate in the ceremony because she had sexual relations with a young warrior, she usually decides to run from her husband and go to her relatives to report that she made a wrong-doing. Parents and/or any other relative must escort her to the husband's homestead asking for forgiveness. They go with a female cow together with local beers, and when the conversation is ready, the woman can stay at home and is later permitted to give meat to her husband in the second phase of Orng'esher. It is considered no longer a taboo to engage in the later part of the Orng'esher ceremony and ritual as long as the husband has already received a female cow. When the **Ingai** ceremony is over, the initiates have to make further preparations for the last phase of Orng'esher called **Ingiri** (the ritual of eating meat).

## Ingiri

The *Ingiri* ceremony and ritual is performed in different localities at different times, depending on the preparation of a particular locality. It takes about four months to make necessary logistical plans. The members of the graduating age set need to contribute money, several cows, sheep and goats to be slaughtered during the celebration day, collecting enough honey to make sufficient local beer, to identify a special boma, to get a ritual ceremonial Ox and to find a Boma and a person to give meat to the initiates depending on the instructions of the diviner (Oloiboni). The age set spokesman (*Alaigwanani*), his assistants (*ingopirr*), age set patrons (*Loo-menyeilayok*) and other elders have to convene a secret meeting to identify a boma and a person within the graduating age set who can bear the heavy responsibility of giving meat to the initiates. However, there are some qualities and criteria's to be considered when choosing that person; (1) he must have at least two wives, (2) he must be the first born and (3) he must be from a well known family with a remarkable history in the Maasai community. When all these plans are completed, the leaders propose and set the date for the ceremony.

Personal preparations are also very important for a participating initiate. As the ceremony draws near, each graduating warrior has to seek four important things that are quite special during the celebration day. Firstly, he must find a well decorated tobacco container made of bamboo tree to be worn around the neck. Secondly, he must find long stick called Alartat. Thirdly, he must have a special neckless for elders called Engonongoi and, fourthly, he must have flywhisk (*Oleinywa*). All these items symbolize that a warrior has completely retired and become a junior elder. All wives of the graduating age set also do personal preparation for the ceremony as well. They have to wear blue clothes, decorate themselves with colorful beading, and paint their faces with white, black and red oak.

The celebration day starts in the evening, as soon as the ritual bull is brought and arrives safely at the boma where the event takes place. Singing and dancing goes on though out the night while the ceremonial bull is fed honey beer. Early in the morning the initiates collaborate with senior elders to make a ritual enclosure called "**Osingira**" in the middle of the Kraal. Following the completion of Osingira and when an elder to suffocate the bull is ready, the bull is laid down by the group of initiates pointing at a right direction. Again, when the suffocation is completed, the pendulous skin under the neck of the ritual bull is slit to make a pool of blood. The blood is then mixed with milk and honey beer to make it a ritual drink where every participating initiate kneels to drink. After this ritual drink all members of the graduating age set are supposed to go outside of the kraal, leaving the senior elders

to supervise the roasting of the ceremonial bull inside of Osingira. All members of the graduating age set must go out-side for a meeting to receive the necessary advice and the words of wisdom from the senior elders. The main speakers 'of the meeting are Ilaigwanak (age set leaders), Patrons, and other influential elders in the community. Elders emphasize a sense of respect, solidarity as well as to insist the initiates completely abandon all the roles of warriors and assume new roles of elders in the community. This act symbolizes the welcoming of new adult men in the Maasai community.

When the meeting is closed, all initiates must go back to the Boma to have meat, fed to them by their wives. All the meat from right side of the ritual bull must be cut into smaller pieces and taken inside the house of the person responsible to give meat to the graduating initiates. Every initiate must go inside with his wife (wives) and have few pieces of meat together. It is the first time for the initiates (retiring warriors) to have meat with women. As soon as this ritual eating of meat is complete warriors have to go back to the kraal to eat the rest of the meat together with their wives. As soon as they finish, all initiates with their wives must gather in the kraal and be blessed by a group of selected elders. When they finish singing and dancing continues until evening. After this ceremony, warriors become elders and gain full responsibility of their own families. They are now allowed to move away from their father's homestead and form their own homestead as they wish, but fathers still remains as advisors in decision making.

## Conclusion

The initiation ceremonies and age-set system as pinpointed in this report entail a fundamental part of the Maasai social structure. They hold members of the community together and maintain social harmony and tranquility. Although locally run from within the Maasai community, these practices call for both national and international recognition as crucial intangible cultural heritage of humanity. However, the burgeoning socio-cultural transformations and global forces in the current context might threaten the Maasai cultural organization. As the Maasai community experiences a great exodus of young Murrans/warriors to towns in search of watchmen and other business activities, the age set system may be compromised. The need to document and do more research on Maasai intangible cultural heritage is clear.

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# Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Ngorongoro: Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities

Field work: 12/10/ 2016- 26/11/2016 in Irkeepusi Village

Research by Jennifer Sharp and Laangakwa Twati

Report by Jennifer Sharp

## Introduction

Tourism plays a huge role in the economy of Tanzania; either directly or indirectly accounting for 14% of GDP and 12% of employment (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2015). The role of tourism is only expected to grow, as the tourist industry in Tanzania is forecast the 9<sup>th</sup> largest long term growth rate in the world (WTTC, 2015). It is no doubt that tourism will play a huge role in the development of the nation. However, as UNESCO acknowledges, tourism does not necessarily bring benefits to all those it encounters; growth in the industry can damage the livelihoods of local people just as easily as it can bolster them. It is therefore important to manage tourism growth, to ensure that developments support UNESCO's goal to fight against poverty, protect the environment and support the mutual appreciation of cultures (UNESCO, 2016).

This report will focus on Cultural Tourism within Ngorongoro, specifically the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA). This is because the NCA is by far the most significant and well visited tourist site in the area, as well as the location for our field research base. The research was carried out independently by UNESCO, and not in collaboration with the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA). The report focuses on those elements of tourism that aim to provide information about the Maasai culture, as this is the only cultural group permitted to live within the area. Cultural tourism is of specific interest to UNESCO, as it provides an opportunity to raise the incomes of those living within the area, as well as to protect intangible cultural heritage. As claimed by UNWTO, 'Tourism offers a powerful incentive for preserving and enhancing intangible cultural heritage, since the revenue it generates can be channelled back into initiatives to aid its long-term survival' (UNWTO, 2017). It provides an opportunity for development that allows communities to preserve and maintain their cultural practices. Furthermore, as such cultural heritage is often carried by historically marginalised

groups; it provides opportunities to bring social and economic developments to those often left out of wider economic improvements.

A sustainable tourism strategy for the NCA must aim to ‘protect and conserve the sites while enriching the lives of local communities and at the same time enhancing the experience of travellers’ (UNESCO, 2015). Opportunities to make progress towards all three of these aims lie in sustainable cultural tourism.

## Methodology

This report is based on six weeks of anthropological field work in the NCA. Interviews were conducted with tour guides, managers and those selling crafts at cultural bomas. Two site visits to cultural bomas were undertaken, where researchers participated as tourists. Interviews were also conducted with members of the pastoral council. Furthermore, many informal conversations were held with community members, other tourists and those working at the boma during the research period. Although the vast majority of research was conducted in one village around the North West rim of the crater, the issues, challenges and opportunities presented are relatively general and are likely to apply to other wards of the NCA, as well as to cultural tourism projects in other areas of Tanzania. The issues found at the research site are also corroborated by research undertaken at other cultural tourist sites in Tanzania. As stated earlier, this research was carried out independently by UNESCO and did not involve the NCAA. The location of the research was chosen to be inside the NCA due to the high proportion of cultural tourism taking place inside the national park. Although some of the issues raised by the research are specific to the NCA, the report is not intended as an evaluation of NCAA management, but rather uses one specific location to draw out key themes and issues with cultural tourism in Ngorongoro, and Tanzania generally.

This report focuses on existing cultural tourism projects in the NCA, the challenges they are facing, and steps that could be taken by UNESCO and other actors to enhance their positive impact on the area, and their long-term sustainability. It will not focus on new opportunities or ideas for tourism based projects, as the findings suggest that there is ample opportunity to improve existing projects. Enhancing benefits within existing project structures is likely to be more cost effective, and easier to implement.

## Cultural Tourism within the NCA

The NCA is Tanzania's most popular tourist destination, and up to half of all visitors to Tanzania visit the crater (Melita, 2015). However, the vast majority of tourism within the NCA, and Tanzania in general, is centred on wildlife. A recent survey established that only 49% of visitors to Tanzania's Northern Circuit were drawn to the area due to cultural attractions, and only 23% considered indigenous cultures a primary attraction (Okello and Yerian, 2009). Okello and Yerian recommended that the cultural and historic aspects of the NCA be better highlighted in order to encourage tourists to stay longer in the area. Sustainable and ethical development in this area can improve local livelihoods, as well as helping to diversify opportunities available to tourists, and therefore reduce competition between attractions on the Northern Circuit. According to our research, the majority of Maasai living within the NCA are eager to capitalise on opportunities for cultural tourism providing they are consulted, and their views are respected before decisions are made.

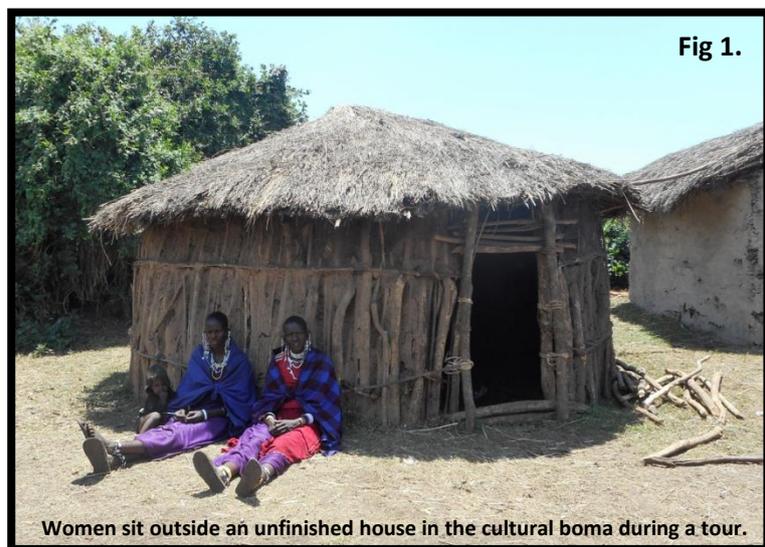
Within the NCA, there are several cultural tourism programmes already in operation. By far the most utilised of these are the Cultural Bomas. At these bomas, tour companies are charged 30,000TSH per car, are guided around a purpose built traditional Maasai boma and informed about livelihoods, traditions and social structure. There are also often traditional dances and demonstrations of traditional practices, such as making fire using only sticks and dry grass. Furthermore, there is usually a market where women can sell jewellery, Maasai ceremonial items, and other handicrafts as a source of income. Other cultural tourism practices operating in the area include young men and women performing traditional dances at nearby lodges, or giving walking tours, where Maasai guides take visitors hiking in the NCA, and share indigenous knowledge about plants, traditional medicine and other traditional practices. Maasai in the area may also lend donkeys to tour companies for walking tours or informally ask for money for photographs from tourists (Melita and Mendlinger, 2013). Some young men are also employed in other sectors of the tourist industry, for example, as security guards at lodges and campsites, or as wildlife rangers by the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA). There was a suggestion, however, that employers in the area may discriminate against, or prefer not hiring Maasai for some employment opportunities, because it is believed they will be more lenient with other Maasai caught breaking rules, for example when confronted with issues of animal poaching or grazing cattle on lodge property.

I have chosen to focus on three areas of cultural tourism; cultural bomas, handicrafts and walking tours. I believe these offer the greatest option to improve livelihoods in the area. I will examine tours around cultural bomas, the sale of Maasai handicrafts and Maasai walking safaris in order to establish existing strengths, weaknesses and potentials for improvement.

## The Cultural Bomas

According to our research, there are seven cultural bomas operating within the NCA, all of which are community based, not for profit projects. Private, profit making bomas are not permitted within the NCA, although there are many outside the conservation area that may be used by tour companies if they offer a cheaper price. Several respondents claimed that undercutting by private bomas close to the area forced the community led programmes to drive their own prices down. Interviewees also claimed that these bomas were not always run by Maasai people, which caused upset as people felt their culture was being exploited and presented in a way they could not control, as well as reducing benefits of the community run projects.

The community based cultural bomas have brought considerable benefit to the villages located near them. As stated before, tour companies pay a fee to receive a guided tour of the village. The Maasai Pastoral Council will recruit people to live in the village and pay them a small salary for providing the tourists a glimpse into Maasai life (see fig 1). The community members chosen are usually those in need of extra income, perhaps those owning less livestock. Chosen community members are rotated every 18- 24 months in order to spread the benefits of the project. In addition to providing work, the money made by the boma is used to support the community, 'a small fund created by the visitor's fees that is meant for the people' (Respondent A). Secondary school expenses such as books, uniforms and travel costs are regularly sponsored by the cultural boma. Several students have also been sponsored to go to university or college, or even complete masters' degrees. In other situations, families in poor financial situations have been bought sheep or goats to enable them to have means of livelihood. The benefits of the boma are distributed by those who have an in-depth knowledge of the local area and people, and are therefore able to distribute them with maximum efficiency.



Although an argument could be made that an informal system of money allocation is prone to corruption, there seemed to be no evidence of corruption amongst the managers of the cultural boma, and most local people seemed very happy with the project.

The Cultural Bomas also bring other benefits to the village. One respondent stated that it provides an opportunity and incentive for young people to learn English and practice with native speakers; 'they can go there, they can learn as a tour guide, interact with the people, improve their language skills' (Respondent E, 2016). Several young men have made connections to NGO's through meeting with staff members during tourist visits to the cultural boma. This has often also resulted in funding for other community based projects. Other guides have been recruited to work in lodges through connections made. Several interviewees talked about the more general benefit of meeting and talking with people of different cultures and expanding their knowledge about the world. One respondent claimed, 'that kind of spirit encouraged many kids to go to school' (Respondent S, 2016). The excitement of interacting with new people, and the tangible prospect of job opportunities encourages people to stay in school and improve their English and Swahili. Several respondents stated that the boma also cultivates a sense of pride in Maasai cultural practices, 'they can see that the other people like our culture... and they have in their mind that we must keep our culture' (Respondent S, 2016) Finally, one interviewee stated that tourist desires to visit the cultural boma encourages road maintenance and building by the NCAA, 'it was important to build this kind of road to make accessibility for the tourists' (Respondent L, 2016). This then facilitates transport in and out of Karatu, a town close to the gate of the NCA. Transport to the town is crucial as it facilitates trade, provides an opportunity to buy food and other necessary items, and provides access to the internet, banking services, and well equipped healthcare facilities.

### Challenges of Entrance Fees

The Cultural Bomas have therefore had a largely positive impact on the communities of the NCA. However, there are several challenges faced. The first of these is the limited income they receive from tourist companies. Many expressed a deep frustration at the disparity between the money charged by the boma, at 30,000tsh per car (up to 8 people) compared to up to \$50 per person the tour company receives, a mark up of over 3000%. Managers at the boma claimed they would like to increase the rates charged by the boma, but said they were unable to do so, as tour companies would simply visit cheaper bomas. When asked if there had been any meetings amongst the different bomas regarding collectively raising prices, respondents all claimed that they would be undercut by private bomas outside of the conservation area and tour companies would simply visit those bomas instead. One respondent pointed out that private bomas profited from the sale of jewellery and souvenirs, whereas community run programmes leave all profit to the individual maker. This makes private bomas less reliant on entrance fees, and therefore able to undercut the community run programmes; 'The private boma can cut costs and charge less to the tourists, can make profit from the jewellery. It

is not easy to stop' (Respondent M, 2016). Many respondents also expressed frustration at the fact that tourists were largely unaware of the small percentage of the fee that actually reaches the boma, believing that they have donated to a community run project.

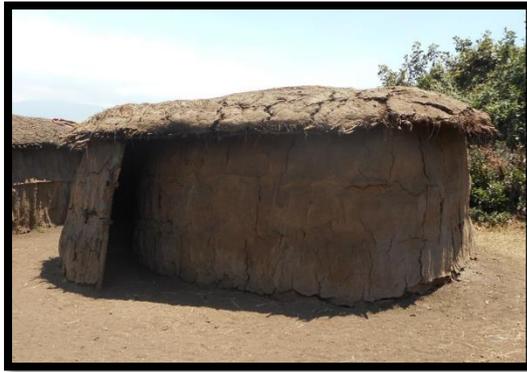
Furthermore, drivers regularly refuse to pay the full 30,000tsh fee per car, giving just 20,000 or less and keeping the remainder of the money for themselves. 'They say they can go to other bomas besides this one so sometimes the drivers refuse to pay' (Respondent A, 2016). Managers of the project claim there are no real methods to dispute this kind of corruption, as tour companies are not proactive in combating the issue, and neither is the NCAA as 'it is not in the interest of the company' (Respondent A, 2016) It was suggested by boma managers and guides that bomas should be paid directly by tour companies each month, rather than through drivers, to avoid missed payments, and that contracts should be signed before tour companies are allowed to visit the boma. Alternatively, fees for visiting the bomas could be charged at the main ticket office and transferred to the MPC or boma managers. These initiatives would need to be supported by the NCAA or UNESCO in order to be effective.

Ultimately, the income from the cultural boma is not enough to cover the increasing demands from the community. The money collected in tourist entry fees provides a key source of support to many low income families in the area, yet it is not enough to support all the families who request help. There is a high level of poverty within the NCA, and therefore a large number of people who require assistance if they wish their children to go to school or college. Therefore, the boma needs to make more money from entrance fees, or have a higher number of visitors in order to make a greater profit. It also needs a guarantee that it can collect the money it is owed from tour companies. This is a complicated issue, as, as pointed out by respondents, tour companies will always pay the minimum fee to attend a cultural boma. However, there are some possible solutions. One respondent suggested the NCAA automatically include the fee to the cultural boma in the standard park fee, giving all visitors a right to visit a cultural boma if they wish. This would make companies far less likely to visit private bomas outside of the park and also ensure that tour companies paid the required fee. It would also provide the opportunity to raise the cultural boma fee, as clearly the boma should be receiving more than 30,000 per car for the services they provide. The NCAA could keep a record of the specific boma visited, and divide funds accordingly if necessary. Therefore each boma would be paid according to the amount of visitors it receives. This would also allow for cultural tourism to be included in a more formal manner as part of the NCA's appeal and encourage the NCA and tourist agencies to promote cultural tourism to the extent that it promotes wildlife tourism in the area.

## Challenges of Improving Content

If tour companies are to be encouraged to use community based bomas, it is reasonable to expect these bomas to provide a certain level of service. However, there are some challenges with the tours and products currently provided to tourists in the cultural bomas. The managers of the boma already claimed to have made changes to the way the boma was initially run, in order to improve their service, including not allowing the women to present their jewellery to the tourists directly, and therefore preventing aggressive selling, and also preventing the guides from overtly requesting money or tips. However, there is still room for further changes.

The manager of the boma claimed that the question most asked by tourists is 'Is this real? Is this really the way that you live?' (Respondent A, 2016). This question was repeated by several tourists during my time in Tanzania, including in the NCA. It refers to the scepticism many tourists have adopted towards commercialised presentations of indigenous culture (Bruner, 2001). Inaccuracies and exaggerations by tour guides, witnessed during my visits to cultural bomas, feed into this scepticism and lend credit to the tourist's ideas that they are being deceived or shown a 'fake' village. The ramifications of this are real, as many tourists I met in Tanzania were dissuaded from visiting a Maasai village on the belief that their experience would not be authentic. With the rise of travel blogs, negative reports of cultural bomas, of which there are many, also dissuade tourists from investing in the experience. During the tourists visits I witnessed, the tour guide claimed that the village was one family, with one patriarch and his many wives and children, who lived in the area full time. This was not true as, as stated before, the man and women are selected by the MPC in order to make further income. The choice to avoid stating that tourist bomas are purpose built is found in other research, for example Salazar (2006). The guide had no real script for the tour, and often appeared to be inventing customs, such as claiming that 'Maasai men are not allowed to get married until they can jump three feet from the ground' (Field notes, 2016). The guide did not appear confident when delivering his tour, adding to visitor's scepticism. This adds a negative spin to the tourists' experience of the boma, as they feel they cannot trust the guide to deliver accurate information. In a world where tourists are now often aware that indigenous culture is being presented in a certain way, the training of guides is paramount.



**Fig 2. The traditional, nomadic houses built in the cultural boma (left) and the more modern round houses commonly used in the village.**

The Maasai people interviewed largely believed that showing any aspect of modernity to the tourists would detract from their experience, a view they said had been repeated to them several times by tour companies (see fig 2). One interviewee claimed ‘the first thing, is to understand the mind of the tourist. They are coming and they want to see a poor, poor, underdeveloped tribe’ (Respondent S, 2016). This belief fuelled a ban on modern clothing, shoes, watches and phones inside the cultural boma. The same interviewee claimed, ‘to ensure satisfaction of the visitor, we must pretend that we know nothing. You can find the guide that can speak English but they are not allowed to speak English , because they have to show that we are too primitive, we don’t know how to speak English, to wear clothes , that we don’t even know how to shower!’ (Respondent S, 2016). This attitude creates damaging stereotypes about Maasai people, insults and humiliates people who work at the site, and speaks volumes about the unequal power relations between tour companies and the workers at the cultural boma. Furthermore, visitors are far more aware of the exaggeration of ‘primitiveness’ than either the cultural boma workers or tour companies realise.

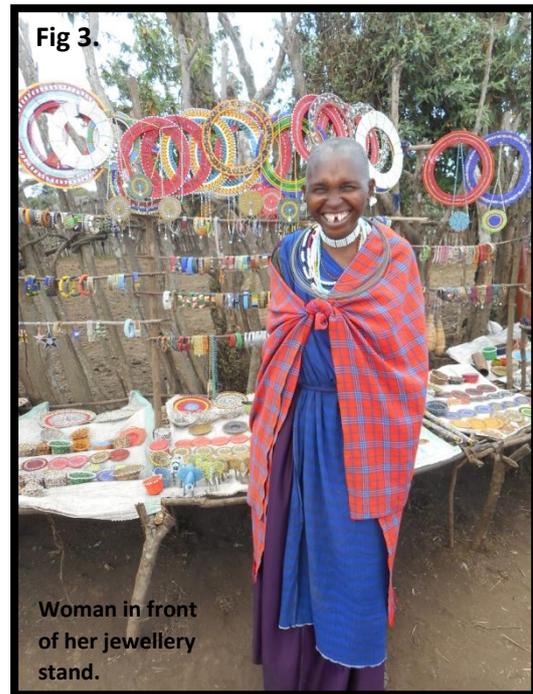
Ultimately, the emphasis on authentic primitive culture at the boma is damaging both the image of Maasai people and the long term image of cultural tourism in the area. It would be far better to be transparent about the changes in Maasai culture in the area. It is generally accepted that visitors wish to see ‘authentic maasai culture;’ that is, the opportunity to take photographs of people in traditional dress, and emphasise the unique aspects of the culture such as dancing, social structure and livelihoods. However, it is also reasonable to assume that visitors are interested in how the culture is changing over time. I would argue that, although traditional dress and practices are promoted in the boma, the visitors should be informed that this is a demonstration of traditional culture, rather than the reality. I also believe that visitors would be glad to know about the community development aspect of the cultural boma, and that their entrance fees have gone towards school fees and livelihood investments for members of the community. This is a really positive aspect of the bomas, and so should not be hidden from visitors. Furthermore, it is evident that guides require training on giving tours around the cultural boma, and perhaps a script with key facts and context to the demonstrations

given. A training given with the help of tour companies, anthropologists and Maasai knowledgeable about local traditions could go a long way to improving the quality of tours given. This should also include training on codes of conduct, including being positive and friendly, a ban on drinking alcohol around the boma and also on entering the boma when inebriated.

### Challenges in Selling Maasai Handicrafts

The market for jewellery provided by the cultural boma also provides a significant benefit to the women in the area. Women are often excluded from household decisions regarding money, and this provides a source of income that they can control. Furthermore, those women who do not have male relatives to rely upon have access to their own source of income (see fig 3). The problem, however, is that a huge number of women from the village attempt to sell very similar produce. Furthermore, the produce, although beautiful, is not of a particularly high standard, and might break easily. Some guides also claimed that all jewellery was from old Maasai designs, despite the fact that several were evidently of the Tanzanian flag, or simply bought from nearby markets. This caused some tourists to doubt that the jewellery was even handmade by the women in the village. The women therefore, were not selling as much jewellery as they wished, averaging just one or two pieces per person, per month, therefore not nearly enough for a livelihood. One woman claimed 'we make one piece, and it can stay there for one year... there is no alternative, we simply need to get more clients' (Respondent T, 2016).

Some women already had training in jewellery making, but these programmes were usually not long enough for women to improve their skills and create jewellery of a higher standard. One week courses were common, but needed to be at least a month to facilitate significant improvement. These longer courses would also enable women to sell their jewellery to nearby lodges and gift shops. In addition, there was a lack of diversity of design, meaning all women were competing, and other Maasai gift shops. Most tourists felt they could buy the jewellery present at the boma for cheaper prices in markets elsewhere in Tanzania. Training ought to help women produce unique jewellery designs, or at least introduce new designs to encourage tourists to buy more. Women should also be trained in recording or being aware of the time and expenses that go into making any one piece, and price it accordingly. Basic business skills, as well as improvements in jewellery making, could help improve the women's profit margins.



**Fig 3.**

**Woman in front of her jewellery stand.**

Cultural knowledge would also help to encourage jewellery and souvenir purchases. During interviews with jewellery makers, I found that the ceremonial necklaces worn by women are almost always white. The ceremonial staff, laigwanani staff and other ceremonial items also have a specific and interesting use, yet this is not always conveyed to the tourists. Guides should inform tourists about the ceremonial purposes of items for sale, as tourists are more likely to buy if they understand the meaning and relevance behind their souvenir. In addition, external markets for the women's jewellery should be sought, including handicraft websites, fair trade companies and gift shops within Tanzania. Several successful websites exist selling indigenous handicrafts online, providing a fair price to the makers. Furthermore, initiatives such as Walmart's Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative have already worked with Maasai women to improve their access to markets (Scott et al, 2015). This may be feasible within the NCA.

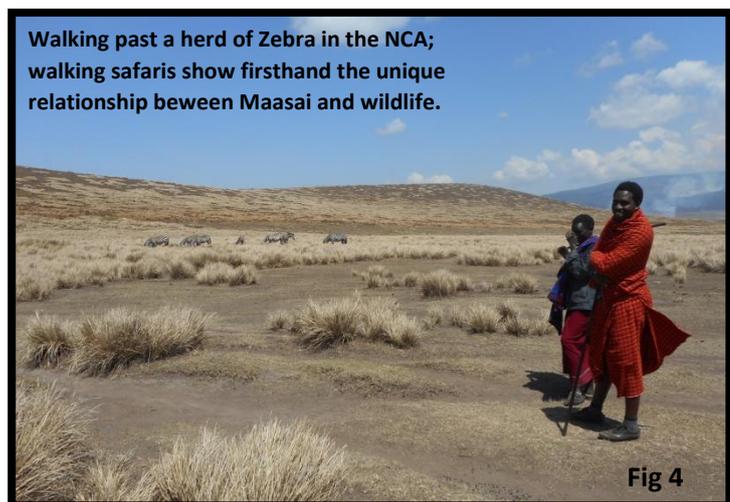
Finally, the issue of exploitation of women needs to be managed by the cultural boma. Two male interviewees expressed their upset at the knowledge of women not receiving the full amount from the sale of their jewellery. The men claimed that, as the guides spoke English and the women did not, the guides would negotiate a high price for the sale from the tourist, and then tell the women they had received less and keep the difference for themselves. This could be avoided by This was also

a problem of not being aware of the exchange rates between dollars and Tanzanian shillings, one woman told me she received 20,000tsh per necklace. I later discovered the tourist was charged \$20 but half her profit was lost as the woman was not aware of the value of her sale. If trainings for guides are to go ahead, a code of conduct and awareness that unethical behaviour will be punished by the managements is essential. All profits from the sale must go directly to the makers of the jewellery. Furthermore, training should be given to women directly regarding the pricing and management of their stalls.

## Opportunities for Maasai Walking Tours

The final activity where improvements could be made is that of walking tours or safaris. As vehicle numbers have been cited as a threat to the outstanding natural value of the NCA, walking safaris create the possibility of increasing revenue from tourists without polluting or damaging the area. The Tanzania Tourism Sector Report (Tanzania Invest, 2015) claimed that, although the Ngorongoro Crater is saturated with tourist programmes, sites such as the Olmoti and Empakai Craters, and the Oldupai gorge, are relatively under utilised by tourists. As there are not roads to Olmoti and Empakai, walking safaris are the best way to view the sites. Furthermore, Maasai make ideal guides to the area as they are already somewhat knowledgeable about the landscape and local flora and fauna (see fig 4). An increase in walking tours in the NCA would encourage tourists to stay in the area an extra day, thereby increasing national park revenue, as well as provide opportunities for young, English speaking Maasai within the tourism industry, and encourage a more environmentally sustainable form of tourism.

Several young men interviewed claimed to have given walking tours around the NCA. However, this was not a regular form of employment, as the demand for walking tours was not high enough. However, tour companies could make a considerable profit from walking tours, as the costs are far lower than a vehicle safari, and a fair guides wage would be easily covered by the prices charged to tourists. If knowledgeable, well trained guides were easily available to tour companies, it would provide an excellent opportunity to diversify services offered in the NCA.



It is important to note that, as in the cultural bomas, the attitude of guides on walking safaris is often, although not always, that it is 'not a matter of getting the details right, but of impressing and seducing the tourists' (Salazar, 2006). Therefore, guides are often not well trained, lack some knowledge crucial for guiding and may be inclined to invent information. Again, although this may work in some instances, guides often underestimate tourists' knowledge, which could lead to a bad reputation for the activity. Good experiences of walking tours will be shared online and in person, as will bad ones, and therefore training guides is highly important. Salazar's account of a tour guide training in Arusha stresses that guides are told not to 'mess up their facts' as tourists may have guidebooks about, or have personal knowledge of, wildlife or plants. The training also provided guides with a script which, although it may be adapted or changed in the moment, helps guides to answer tourists' most common questions. This script should not override the guides own historical and practical knowledge of the area, as this has its own unique value and possibility for education. However, it should provide an ability to cross check their knowledge with an outside source. To give this kind of training to potential Maasai guides would help the industry to grow.

To encourage the growth of walking tours in the NCA that use Maasai guides, UNESCO or the NCAA should support training for Maasai guides in Karatu. Karatu is easily accessible, as well as being a base for several tour operators and lodges. There is a high level of unemployment among young, educated Maasai men, and therefore likely to be those willing to undertake the training. Those guides that complete the training could be added to a database of local guides to be used by tour companies to provide in depth local knowledge on walking tours in the NCA. If a database of trained, competent Maasai guides were available to tour companies, they would be able to offer cultural walking tours as a service to their clients. Furthermore, this database could be shared with lodges and campsites in the area, as walking tours are often arranged outside of a pre-booked safari. Minimum wages and work rights should be upheld to prevent the exploitation of guides.

## Recommendations

Ultimately, there are several actions that could be taken to improve the gains made by Maasai communities from cultural tourism. In summary, these are:

- UNESCO should encourage the NCAA to include the fee for entry into a cultural boma in the standard park entry fee. This will encourage the use of cultural facilities inside the national park, and combat corruption amongst tour company employees.
- If this solution is not feasible, there could be softer measures taken to encourage tour companies to behave ethically. This could be a form of official cultural tourism code of conduct sanctioned by UNESCO or the NCAA that would cover paying cultural bomas promptly and only visiting community based bomas. This could be provided as an award or badge tour companies could use to attract more clients in a saturated and highly competitive market where ethical tourism is becoming increasingly popular.
- UNESCO should assist Cultural Bomas in establishing direct, contractual payment with tour companies to combat corruption.
- Training should be provided for those giving tours of cultural bomas, including assistance developing a script, a guide's code of conduct and training for managers on logging incomes and expenses. I would recommend workshops and training be provided for all local guides in order to ensure positive tourist experiences. An informed, transparent tour of a Maasai boma, with a structure and plan will spread positive reviews of cultural tourism and help to support the growth of the industry, as well as encouraging visitors to buy more souvenirs.
- Jewellery making and basic business training for women selling handicrafts, including an awareness of pricing, exchange rates and assistance creating networks with local lodges and other sellers. Women could be encouraged to place the price directly on their items, to combat exploitation, and have a clearer idea of the profit margin made on each item.
- UNESCO should create a training programme, in partnership with tour companies, to train local walking tour guides. Creating a small database of trained guides to be used by tour

companies to provide walking tours around the Olmoti and Empakai craters, as well as the Oldupai gorge.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, in a region such as the NCA, where livelihood options are limited, cultural tourism provides vital income for Maasai families. However, there is room to increase the gains made by Maasai communities. I have above laid out some opportunities for Maasai people to benefit more from cultural tourism. However, any developments made in the area must be made with the thorough consultation of those that live within the area. Due to a historic neglect of Maasai opinions in NCA policy, there is widespread distrust of all authorities and institutions operating in the area, including UNESCO. It is therefore important that any strategies move slowly, and are shaped by local opinions and knowledge. Involving the pastoral council in the planning of any projects in the area is vital, not only to implementing opportunities in cultural tourism, but in repairing a damaged relationship between UNESCO and the Maasai communities living in the NCA.

It is also important to acknowledge the impact of wider social and economic circumstances on Maasai involvement in the tourism industry. Poor educational facilities in the area, for example, hold many Maasai back from the gains of the tourism industry, as they are unable to speak English and communicate with tourists. Cultural tourism development could therefore be bolstered by investments in education facilities in the area.

The methods outlined above, however, should provide relatively simple methods for improving cultural tourism in the area. Improving the products Maasai communities are able to provide to tourists ensures the long-term growth and sustainability of the industry. Improving options for Maasai communities to combat exploitation and corruption creates a growth in the NCA that is inclusive and in keeping with the stated values of both UNESCO and the NCAA. They provide opportunities to protect Maasai citizens of the NCA, protect and educate about the surrounding environment, and make money for both the NCAA and the Tanzanian tourist industry.

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# Conservation, Conflict and Community in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area

Field work: 12/10/ 2016- 26/11/2016 in Irkeepusi Village

Research by Jennifer Sharp and Laangakwa Twati

Report by Jennifer Sharp

## Introduction: The NCA facing rapid change

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) was created in 1959. The Maasai living in the Serengeti were expelled from the area by British Colonial Administrators, but were offered the NCA to use and operate under a multiple land use policy. This was under the condition that they would, with the exception of hunting, be able to 'continue to follow or modify their traditional way of life' (Government of Tanganyika Paper, 1958, in Olenasha, 2014). In 1979, the area was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site under the criteria of outstanding natural features. This was adapted in 2010, when cultural criteria were added to the inscription, making the area a 'mixed' site. Notably, the living Maasai Culture of the NCA is not included as a feature of the site's Outstanding Universal Value, but rather the significant archaeological and paleontological features relating to human evolution (UNESCO, 2010).

Status as a World Heritage Site, a key Tanzanian tourist destination, a site of extensive research by academic and international institutions and a site of traditional livelihoods has created a unique nexus of competing interests. Conflict between the protections of different features of the NCA is not new; there is evidence of such conflicts at the NCA's creation (Olenasha, 2014). However, the rapid pace of globalisation and development, the increase in tourism, the increasing Maasai population and the changes in livelihoods, as well as the threat of climate change, is creating an urgent need for existing conflicts to be addressed in an equitable and sustainable way. UNESCO (2015) claimed that the currently 'primary management objectives are to conserve the natural resources of the property, protect the interests of the Maasai pastoralists, and to promote tourism.' However, it would sometimes appear that these aims are contradictory.

In 1959, the population of the Maasai in the NCA was an estimated 20,000, with 275,000 livestock (UNESCO/ IUCN/ ICOMOS, 2012). In 2013, the estimated population of the Maasai was 87,851 (UNESCO, 2013). This figure is growing exponentially, at an estimated rate of 5.6% per year (Masao et al, 2015) due to high birth rates and a polygamous social structure. The number of cattle, meanwhile, has stabilised, only growing at an average of 1% per year (Masao et al, 2015), indicating a vastly decreased number of livestock per household, and a significant change in Maasai livelihoods.

Development and globalisation have also had a large impact. The formerly nomadic Maasai are now often choosing to settle, leading to more permanent structures. Prior to the reintroduction of the cultivation ban in 2009, many Maasai households were supplementing their livelihoods with food grown on small holdings. Today, some people choose to supplement their income by setting up small businesses, such as food stores, and selling goods bought in the nearby town of Karatu. Essential services such as schools and hospitals have also been built in the NCA. The clustering of people around these services has created areas resembling small towns, leading to a possible departure from the small isolated bomas of Maasai traditional life, although many people do continue to live in bomas. Increased access to solar electricity and the internet has also brought desire for more permanent, modern housing and other aspects globalised culture.

The scale of tourism in the NCA has also vastly changed. In 1969, the number of tourists visiting the area was 54, 518 and the number of vehicles was 24,164. In 2013 this had increased to 647,733 and 129, 968 respectively (Masao et al, 2015). There are currently four lodges, six camps, four picnic sites and two sites for bush lunch in the crater. The importance of the site for tourism in Tanzania, and Tanzania's rapidly growing tourist industry means that more developments are likely, and necessary, to cater to the increasing number of tourists (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2015) .

Finally, significant changes have taken place in the natural environment of the NCA. Natural vegetation succession processes are ongoing, but human- induced climate change has increased the probability and length of droughts in the area. This increases the likelihood of overgrazing, and has impacts on wildlife and Maasai communities alike.

Ultimately, the NCA is changing at an ever- increasing rate, heightening tensions between those who have vested interests in the conservation area. The tensions between the rights of the pastoralist community to sustain themselves and develop a better quality of life, in tandem with others in Tanzania, often appears at odds with the need to protect the natural environment and

wildlife of the NCA. Examining the impact of both of these aims is integral to providing a potential solution for these tensions.

This report will first assess the environmental damage caused by the Maasai to the Ngorongoro conservation area, and the threats of an increasing population on the area's outstanding universal value. It will then use data collected in the NCA to try to outline the opinions and perspectives of Maasai people living in the area. Ultimately, this report argues that many Maasai in the NCA live in situations where they often have limited choices to ensure their own survival. This means that many people are forced to infringe on the rules created to conserve the area. If a balance between conservation and community is to be found, it must provide options for the Maasai to survive and prosper. The needs of the Maasai must be considered to be of at least equal importance to those of conservation.

## Methodology

This report is based on six weeks of anthropological field work in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, as well as secondary data collected from journals and grey literature. During field work, interviews (both in-depth semi structured interviews (ID) and focus group discussions (FGD)) were conducted with many pastoralists, primarily men. Interviews were also conducted with members of the Maasai Pastoral Council, traditional leaders and one indigenous rights NGO based in Arusha. Additionally, many informal conversations were held during the field work period with community members. Conservation is a significant issue in the lives of Maasai people living in the NCA, and is subsequently brought up regularly even in casual conversation. Research was primarily conducted in one village, situated on the North West rim of the crater. Opinions expressed here are therefore not intended to represent the opinions of all Maasai in the NCA. This report suggests, however, that they present a compelling counter narrative to the often-repeated story of human induced environmental destruction in World Heritage Sites. In sites where indigenous people live, their voices are often ignored or not prioritised. Hopefully, the opinions presented here will give some insight into the challenges and contradictions of living in an area with so many competing interests.

## The impact of the Maasai on the Outstanding Universal Value of the NCA

The 'carrying capacity' of the NCA is one that is repeatedly mentioned throughout UNESCO, ICOMOS and IUCN documents. This is the idea that the NCA can only support a certain population of humans and livestock without incurring drastic ecological destruction. The assumption is that the current population of the NCA already far exceeds the carrying capacity (UNESCO, 2015). A carrying capacity figure, however, has never been agreed upon, and it is uncertain exactly what population the NCA can support. This is largely because of the huge range of variables needed to determine such a figure, including rainfall, varying vegetation across different areas of the NCA, the shifting number of competing grazing animals caused by migration, and the shifting number of cattle owned between the rainy and dry seasons. It would also rely on estimating the number of cattle required to support a Maasai household, which varies considerably according to cattle prices, and the availability of supplementary income.

Nonetheless, there are indicators that the current Maasai population are causing environmental damage. High levels of cattle mortality during seasons of drought indicate that grazing resources are low, and overgrazing is likely. Furthermore, there has been an increase in invasive species, such as Parthenium (UNESCO, 2015). Otherwise known as 'famine weed,' this species recolonises disturbed ground, such as that caused by overgrazing. Parthenium emits toxins into the soil that prevent new pastures from growing. It is unpalatable to grazing animals, causes both livestock and human illness, and is difficult to remove on a large scale. Its invasion will therefore only decrease available pasture and increase likelihood of overgrazing in the future. This will also impact other grazing animals, such as wildebeest and zebra, which will in turn affect other animals living in the conservation area. Grazing cows has also caused conflicts between the Maasai and conservation as wild animals put herders and cattle at risk. Both wild animals and humans have been killed in unfortunate meetings between Maasai and predators.

Maasai are also responsible for setting fires in the bush. Bush fires are part of the general management plan of the NCA, as burning grassland can help to simulate new growth of pastures, and to control ticks. It is therefore beneficial for both livestock and grazing wildlife. However, these fires are tightly controlled. Uncontrolled forest fires, illegally started, could cause deforestation and, if burnt land is trampled, leave the land exposed to desertification, soil erosion and invasion of non-native plant species (Mkiramweni, 2014). Fires may also destroy the habitats of certain animal species, for example nesting birds.

Deforestation is also caused by the collecting of firewood and timber and other building materials for new bomas. This has obviously increased with the population, as new structures are needed. More people also use up greater amounts of water, putting strain on water resources, and

also often require transport in and out of the NCA. This all puts strain on the environmental resources of the NCA, although it is worth noting that the water and energy usage, as well as traffic congestion, caused by Maasai inside the NCA is likely to be less than that caused by tourists. Essential development projects such as schools, clinics and other permanent buildings have an environmental impact both during and after the building process.

From 1992 until 2009, subsistence farming was also permitted inside the NCA. During this time, approximately 90% of families adopted cultivation to supplement pastoralism (McCabe, 2010). Cultivation reduced the risks associated with pastoralism, as food would still be available in times of drought and high cattle mortality. Furthermore, it was necessary as not every family in the NCA owns their own livestock. However, conservation authorities believed that cultivation was damaging to the environment of the NCA. It was believed that crops would attract animals, such as elephant and buffalo and would therefore lead to conflicts between the Maasai and wildlife (Ikanda and Packer, 2008). Furthermore, permission to cultivate within the NCA led to increased migration to the area, and the subsequent strain on environmental resources caused by an increased population. Reports by UNESCO, the IUCN and ICOMOS claiming that cultivation was causing significant environmental degradation led to a new cultivation ban being enforced in 2009 (Olenasha, 2014).

Finally, there is evidence that the Maasai population may cause damage to the outstanding cultural features of the NCA. The NCA is an important prehistoric site, featuring fossilised footprints at Laetoli, diverse evolving hominid specimens at the Oldupai gorge, and evidence of the use of stone tools inside the Ngorongoro crater. There are also early cave paintings at Nasera Rock (UNESCO, 2017). However, there is a concern that Oldupai gorge, as an area which often sprouts new grasses early in the rainy season, will become overgrazed, therefore disturbing the ground and a high volume of cattle trampling the area may damage potential new archaeological discoveries. Nasera rock is also used as storage for cattle, which may damage potential archaeological discoveries in the area as well as the previously discovered cave paintings. UNESCO claim that 'the integrity of specific paleo-archaeological attributes and the overall sensitive landscape are to an extent under threat and thus vulnerable due to the lack of enforcement of protection arrangements related to grazing regimes' (UNESCO and ICOMOS, 2011).

It is apparent that an increasing Maasai population places many of the aspects of the NCA considered unique under threat by human activity. Several reports have suggested that the existing population is two or three times that of carrying capacity (UNESCO, 2015) implying that the Maasai population are already causing significant damage. However, the community living in the area hold their own perspectives, and wish for their interests to be equally considered.

## The Maasai Perspective

The Maasai understand that the impact of their livelihoods on the Outstanding Universal Values of the NCA is under constant assessment. Interactions with NCAA officials, international institutions and reports in the press have meant that the majority of Maasai believe they are being unfairly blamed for environmental destruction. One respondent asserted that;

*'there have been many false information from scholars, by international institutions like UNESCO, Frankfurt (Zoological Society), and many others that Ngorongoro is now getting lost, it is losing its status as a world heritage site because of the Maasai. That is wrong information... from people who do not know our culture, from people who do not know how our culture contributes to conservation'* (ID 9, 2016).

This quote exemplifies the opinions of many Maasai in the NCA. Maasai claim they were conservators long before the international conservation movement began, and take pride in their ability to live in harmony with nature. Respondents claimed Maasai culture considers bush meat a taboo, and therefore Maasai do not traditionally hunt for food. Traditional Lion hunting is no longer practiced as ritual (see Ikanda and Packer, 2008). Traditional grazing mechanisms aim to ensure that pasture is available all year round for cattle and no area becomes overgrazed. Special pasture is reserved for young calves, and during the rainy season certain pasture is reserved for times of drought.

It is acknowledged, however, that grazing resources have become scarce in recent years and overgrazing is a problem; *'the places to go for grazing, it is not enough'* (FGD 2, 2016). During our research, many families were forced to buy cattle feed in town to supplement nutrients received through grazing. However, many people resent the accusation that this is because the number of cows inside the NCA is too great, and rather attribute overgrazing to the restrictions on pasture. Cows are concentrated in limited areas due to grazing restrictions and it is this, rather than the number of cattle that has led to invasive plant species. This was also stated in a UNESCO workshop (2014). Cows are no longer allowed to graze in the crater, an area where cattle previously obtained salt, and water in the dry season (Olenasha, 2014). This is believed to be because cows cause soil erosion around the crater rim through their traffic in and out each day. Cows may also block crater roads used by tourists. Cows are also prevented from accessing areas at Oldupai gorge, restrictions which are likely to be extended once tourist infrastructure is built at archaeological sites.

Pastoralists feel these restrictions are deeply unfair. Many comparisons were made between perceptions of large scale damage caused by grazing cattle and the total lack of damage attributed to other grazing animals, such as wildebeest and zebra. Many point out that a small number of cattle will make almost no difference compared to huge numbers of migrating wildebeest. One respondent claimed;

*'the cows are only grazing for 10 hours each day, then they must go back to the village. These other animals, they can eat for 24 hours per day. Elephants, wildebeest and zebra, they can eat all day'* (ID 5, 2016).

UNESCO (2015) claimed that they have very little power to control the grazing of wild animals and would therefore rather focus on the control of cattle as a more realistic way of preventing overgrazing. However, the Maasai feel that their livelihoods are simply a lesser priority than the experiences of tourists; *'they don't mind those wild animals to graze, because they can get money from those animals, they cannot get money from the cattle'* (FGD 1, 2016).

Many felt that tourism was consistently prioritised over pastoral livelihoods. New developments were built without consultation that cut off grazing routes and used up local water supplies; *'they block the passages to take cows to other places. They also take pipelines and divert water from nearby streams to their lodges, making seasonal streams to dry'* (ID 4, 2016). This causes overgrazing by limiting the amount of pasture available. Pastoralists expressed frustration at the large amount of land attributed to lodges that was inaccessible; *'our cows do not have enough grass but we cannot go there, and sometimes they even cut it all'* (ID 4, 2016). Many said that, although some lodges held a good relationship with local communities and allowed cows to graze on the property, some would guard their land as *'flies upset the customers'* (ID 4, 2016). Many respondents felt that managers of the NCA showed a distinct lack of concern and knowledge of Maasai grazing patterns and needs. Pastoralists felt that they had little control over new developments on the areas they lived in and depended upon.

There are fairly consistent violations of grazing restrictions. Maasai claimed conflicts with rangers around the rim of the crater were common, as were encroachments by pastoralists onto 'private' land. In times of scarce resources, indigenous grazing restrictions were also regularly violated. However, almost all local people understood that violations were often essential to survival. One pastoralist claimed that *'cows are your investment, so when you see they go weak, you must find ways to adapt'* (FGD 1, 2016), another claimed that *'for the Maasai, cows are life'* (FGD 1, 2016). Such statements are often attributed to the importance of cows in Maasai culture, an

irrational equation of cows to social status. However, the importance of cows is incredibly rational. In an area where no livelihood other than pastoralism is realistically viable, the death of cows due to diseases and malnutrition may well lead to catastrophe for a Maasai family. Many Maasai claimed that if there is no pasture available except in restricted areas, *you will simply have to break conservation rules; 'maybe you will have to pay, but at least your cows will have grass for that day'* (ID 6, 2016). This logic also applies to altercations with wild animals. The conservation authority does not pay compensation for lost cattle when they are attacked by wild animals, but also forbids the Maasai from harming wildlife when predators attack. Most respondents claimed their own lives were so dependent on those of their cows it was sometimes necessary to both break conservation laws, and put themselves in danger.

Finally, these grazing restrictions do not encourage Maasai to have fewer cattle. An increased death rate during the dry season encourages Maasai to keep higher numbers of cattle, as insurance against possible deaths. Furthermore, where cows are unable to produce large quantities of milk due to poor nutrition, it is logical to have greater numbers of cows to supply household needs.

### The Impact of the Cultivation Ban

The dependence on cattle has deepened since the cultivation ban was reinitiated some eight years ago. As stated earlier, when cultivation was permitted some 90% of families grew their own food, and traded with other people in the NCA. This small scale agriculture was extremely important to families in the NCA as it enabled families to gain adequate nutrition and supplement their income through selling excess crops. Families without access to livestock were also able to sustain themselves. The devastating impact of the cultivation ban cannot be understated, nor can its impact on local perceptions of international institutions such as UNESCO and IUCN. Many Maasai believe that UNESCO pressured the NCAA to ban cultivation by claiming cultivation was endangering the World Heritage Status of the Site. This is based on the conclusions of a joint UNESCO/ IUCN mission in 2008, claiming the 'Outstanding Universal Value of the Property is increasingly threatened by the impact of resident human populations and unsustainable land use practices linked to subsistence agriculture' (UNESCO/ IUCN, 2008, in Olenasha, 2014). In 2009, 'armed guards destroyed peoples' crops; people were severely beaten and many were arrested and jailed on suspicion of cultivation' (IWGIA, 2016). Pastoralists claimed that during this time UNESCO's name was repeatedly used as justification for their actions. One respondent claimed, *'people hate the government second, but the first is UNESCO'* (Respondent P, ID, 2016).

Today, the NCAA continues to destroy any attempt to grow crops in the area and UNESCO, despite claiming that they had simply urged the NCAA to enter into a dialogue with communities, continued to recommend the implementation of the cultivation ban (UNESCO, 2011). In both 2012 and 2013 children from the NCA were treated for malnutrition and in 2013, children died (Ngorongoro District Councillors, pers. Com, 2013 in IWGIA, 2016). There are also claims that an outbreak of measles in 2011, resulting in the death of over 200 children, would have had a far lower death count had the children infected not been so malnourished (PINGOS, 2013). It is certainly arguable that the cultivation ban in Ngorongoro has resulted in deaths of Maasai children as it instantly plunged vulnerable people into abject poverty.

Government provision of maize to replace food cultivated has been far below required levels. One man claimed maize is not brought every month, rather every few months, there is never enough to feed all the families affected and the maize is often of a very poor quality and mouldy; *'not even good enough for cows'* (Respondent L, ID, 2016). Furthermore, the pride taken in providing food through labour is replaced by a dependency on government handouts, which those living in the NCA resent. The NCAA claimed to UNESCO (2015) that the provision of 1900 tonnes of Maize since the cultivation ban was a 'benefit' of living in the NCA for Maasai communities. This was exemplified by an indigenous rights activist, who stated *'I saw on the news the other day, that the government are going to provide food aid to the people of Ngorongoro. But, is that really what the Maasai want? Is it coming as a right or is it coming as a privilege?'* (Respondent A, FGD, 2016). The Maasai communities in question have repeatedly requested growing their own food as an alternative to this 'benefit' which Maasai feel is both inadequate and degrading.

The cultivation ban has had far reaching consequences. Most families in the NCA face food insecurity, and malnutrition is widespread. Depression and hopelessness caused by poverty entrenched by the ban is easily observable. Malnutrition in children impacts their ability to attend school, and their ability to concentrate when in attendance. It also limits abilities of families to pay for school fees and other expenses. Many men have been forced to seek work in the city as watchmen, or have had to borrow land from relatives outside of the conservation area in order to be able to cultivate. One respondent claimed that;

*'People had to leave after the cultivation ban. There were some families who did not have any cattle. No cows, no goats no sheep. But, previously, they were able to survive. They could grow some potatoes and some other vegetables, and they could even sell some of these things if they needed money. But after the cultivation ban, what could they do to survive? So they had to move, they contacted some relatives and they asked for some small piece of land, and they could move*

*there to cultivate. The family would split. Some of them would move to cultivate and they would come back with their food and their money'* (ID 8, 2016).

It is arguable that such forced migration was part of the initial aim of the cultivation ban. It deters migration to the area, and provides an incentive for people to relocate to Jema. UNESCO and the NCAA's long term pastoralist strategy involves the voluntary relocation of pastoralist families outside of the NCA, and the 2009 cultivation ban increased volunteers (UNESCO, 2012). However, the local people see this as a form of forced relocation, starving the Maasai out of the NCA. The majority that remain in the NCA are largely totally dependent on pastoralism, meaning that grazing lands must be found regardless of conservation laws and even long term environmental impacts, in order to ensure survival.

Additionally, some Maasai indicated that the cultivation ban had been counterproductive as households, faced with starvation, were forced to hunt wild animals in order to survive. Maasai were often reluctant to talk about poaching, due to its illegality, but some indicated that hunting buffalo was becoming, or could become, more common. Although the Maasai have a taboo on eating bush meat, such taboos were likely to be ignored when people had no other option but to hunt in order to survive. One man claimed; *'people may end up hunting wild animals soon, they are very hungry and have nothing else to do'* (ID 5, 2016). This development highlights the unsustainable nature of conservation laws that drastically diminish the quality of life of the Maasai.

## Maasai Resistance to Relocation

## Discussion

It is evident that the NCA cannot support an infinite number of people and livestock. The desires of Maasai communities to develop and have access to some benefits of modern life put pressure on the natural resources of the NCA, and potentially it's outstanding universal value. However, it is also evident that the measures taken to control this impact have been incredibly harmful to the Maasai community, and have not achieved their stated aims. Pastoralists often cited the three aims of the management strategy of the NCA, 'to conserve the natural resources of the property, protect the interests of the Maasai pastoralists, and to promote tourism' (UNESCO, 2015). This citing was often used to express disappointment in authorities, that the interests of tourists, and of environmentalists were upheld, but at the great expense of Maasai people. This is difficult to disagree with, considering that malnutrition is considered a permissible consequence of conserving the environment of the NCA. Considering that the NCAA earned US\$ 37,901,981.79 in 2013

(UNESCO, 2015), it is not surprising that Maasai living in the NCA see malnutrition as a reflection of management priorities. One young man claimed; *'the NCAA believe it is better you die than a Rhino'* (ID 8, 2016).

An UNESCO report claims that policies in the NCA have been 'scattered or developed on a haphazard basis and uncoordinated, often in response to political and economic pressures with little consideration as to the implications for the future' (UNESCO, 2015). This is evident with measures to control Maasai impact on the environment. Grazing restrictions have failed to solve problems of overgrazing, banning cultivation has caused serious human damage, and the previous authoritarian actions of authorities, including eviction, have caused mistrust. This mistrust must be overcome if any sustainable solutions to the conflicts between conservation and the Maasai are to be found.

One member of the pastoral council claimed that authorities had consistently ignored the views of the Maasai people in management decisions. The Maasai were not consulted when the site was re-nominated under cultural criteria in 2010 (IUCN, 2010), and they consistently feel excluded from decisions or attempts to find solutions to conflicts. Many people believed that this was because the NCAA were looking for a method to remove the Maasai. One man claimed;

*'the government does not want the Maasai living on this land. They are trying to drive us to force us to move, the services are not good, the schools and the hospitals, and they keep us hungry... They want people to leave here of their own accord. They plan that one day this (NCA) will be just like the crater, an area only for wild animals. That is why we are only allowed to build temporary houses because one day we will have to leave this place'* (ID 8, 2016).

There may be some truth in this statement. If the NCA is to be kept as a national park, the Maasai population cannot increase infinitely. However, people should not be deprived of a reasonable quality of life for the sake of World Heritage.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This report has several recommendations regarding the management of the impact of the Maasai on the outstanding universal value of the NCA.

Ultimately any step to manage the population of the NCA must prioritise the needs of the Maasai. This report suggests two methods of doing this;

- 1) Voluntary Relocation to suitable land with good amenities. This should be a transparent process, with people given full information about the new land, the resources available and

adequate financial compensation. In an age of internet and photography, those willing to relocate should be given all the information possible to make an informed decision, and feel as though they are benefitting from relocation, not as though they are forced from their homes.

- 2) Improve education to promote movement to towns and cities. Many pastoralists claimed that Maasai youth wanted good jobs, houses and an opportunity to leave the boma, but had little access to good education and alternative livelihoods. Quality education encourages people to leave the NCA and start lives elsewhere. In addition, we may assume that better educated people are likely to have fewer children.

Neither of these will solve the problem of Maasai population pressure in the short term, but committing to a sustainable strategy now will enable the possibility of a long term solution.

This report also makes several more general recommendations for the process of managing the NCA:

- 1) The human rights of residents must be at the forefront of every management decision taken within the NCA. All management decisions must be thoroughly examined for their impact on local residents before they are implemented.
- 2) The Maasai must be consulted and respected at every stage of the decision making process. Management strategies appear to rarely take account of the complex interaction of the Maasai with their environment, their survival strategies and culture. The Maasai are arguably the people with the greatest personal stake in the management of the NCA, and should therefore be considered at every stage of the management process. In practical terms, this may involve giving the Maasai Pastoral Council a role in the management of the NCA that has greater power than simply advising.
- 3) In order to ensure that Maasai wellbeing is considered equal to the aims of conservation and tourism, Maasai community development projects should be assigned a greater proportion of the revenue of the NCAA.
- 4) Transparency between UNESCO, the NCAA and the Maasai community is paramount. Therefore, steps must be taken to ensure local residents are informed about all conservation laws, their purpose and their implementation. Equally, local residents should have their opinions regarding conservation laws heard.
- 5) If voluntary relocation is considered, it must be managed with the wellbeing of the Maasai prioritised. Relocation must be exclusively voluntary, and areas for relocation should have adequate resources, be well connected and suitable for supporting the Maasai way of life.

- 6) All people living in the NCA should have access to food. This report believes that, until a more sustainable plan is found, cultivation should be permitted in the NCA on a small scale. However, if the cultivation ban is to be upheld, food aid should, at the very least, be provided regularly and be of a reasonable quality.

These strategies will hopefully increase the wellbeing of the Maasai, but also start to build trust between management authorities and the Maasai community. Such trust is necessary for any sustainable solutions to conflict within the NCA.

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