

## GEOGRAPHY

The United Republic of Tanzania lies on the east coast of Africa. Its territory, including the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba in the Indian Ocean, is about the size of South Australia. The climate varies from hot and humid on the coast to very dry on the central plateau and milder in the highlands, which include Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak.

## PEOPLE

Tanzania's population is over 37 million. Most people live in the highlands, around Lake Victoria, or along the coast, while vast drier inland areas are sparsely populated. The largest city and port, Dar es Salaam, has 1.5 million residents but the capital city is Dodoma. There are 120 ethnic groups who live peaceably together. Most are of Bantu-speaking origin; people of Arab descent live on the islands and the coastal strip. The official language is Kiswahili. English is also used in education and commerce. About one-third of Tanzanians are Muslims, one-third follow traditional animist beliefs, and one-third are Christians.



Map courtesy of The General Libraries  
The University of Texas at Austin.

## HISTORY

Little has been uncovered of this region's ancient culture. Various tribal states traded with the Arabs, who colonised the coast around 700 AD. With Portuguese exploration in the 16th century, the coast became a centre for trade between India, the Arabian Gulf and Europe.

In the European scramble for Africa during the 19th century, Germany laid claim to an area called Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar was colonised by the British. Britain took control of Tanganyika during World War I and administered the country until independence in 1961. Zanzibar won independence in 1964, and soon united with the mainland to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Julius Nyerere was leader of the independence movement and remained President from 1961 until 1985. His successors undertook economic and political reforms, which have seen Tanzania move towards a free-market economy, and multi-party democracy.

## ECONOMY

In spite of high hopes of building a strong socialist economy after independence, Tanzania remains a low income country which depends upon large amounts of overseas aid. There are low rates of economic growth in rural areas.

Although agriculture dominates the economy, agricultural exports do not earn high enough prices to cover the cost of imports. Most manufacturing units are small (averaging 20 workers) and produce goods for local markets. Gold, tanzanite, iron ore and coal have been found, but are not mined on a large scale.



Education programs have helped this community understand the importance of clean water.

The majority of Tanzanians work in agriculture. However, parts of Tanzania are subject to both droughts and floods, and many farmers grow barely enough for their own needs. Low prices and poor roads have discouraged them from producing more for sale. Food crops include maize, rice, cassava and cooking bananas. Export crops include coffee, cotton and tobacco. Many families earn up to half their cash income from 'bush' resources such as honey, charcoal and wild fruits. Women's contributions to family incomes are vital, but not always recognised. Women represent 51% of the population and head 17% of households. Yet they have little control over land and limited access to training and loans. Tanzania's diverse wildlife attracts tourists to its extensive game reserves which includes the famous Serengeti National Park.

## LIVING CONDITIONS

Traditionally, many Tanzanians lived in family clusters of huts on their own farmland, while others were semi-nomadic. In the 1970s the government moved thousands of people into communal villages. Rural homes are often built of mud brick or cement, with thatched or tin roofs. Many families do not have safe clean water.

The basic diet consists of cereals or cassava (a root crop) made into *ugali* (a stiff porridge), with some vegetables and bananas. Some fish is eaten by people living along the coast or inland water bodies, but very few can afford meat.

The government, together with UNICEF, has extended rural health services, and many children have been immunised against childhood killer diseases. Serious health problems include malnutrition, malaria (spread by mosquitoes) and infectious diseases. Women's health particularly is affected by heavy workloads and anaemia (iron deficiency) which is made worse by malaria. HIV and AIDS threatens communities and is the leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 59 years.



WorldVision provides schools in Tanzania with seeds to encourage tree planting throughout the community.

## Comparatively speaking...

CATEGORY	TANZANIA	AUSTRALIA
Population in millions	38.5	20.3
Urban population (as % of total)	24.2%	88.2 %
GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	\$744	\$31,794
Population living on less than \$2 a day (PPP US\$)	89.9%	0
Population with sustainable access to an improved water source	62%	100%
Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above)	male – 77.0% female – 62.0%	male – 99.0% female – 99.0%
Grade 1 children reaching Grade 5	81%	100%
Life expectancy at birth	male: 50 years female: 52 years	male: 78.5 years female: 83 years
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	112	6
Physicians per 100,000 people	2	247
Adults living with HIV/AIDS (% age 15-49)	7%	0.1%
Internet users (per 1,000 people)	9	698

Source: United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report 2008, Oxford University Press, New York.

## EDUCATION

A major achievement has been the expansion of primary education for both boys and girls. In spite of community school building projects, less than one-fifth of students are able to go on to secondary school.

Almost half the population still live in poverty, which is most severe in rural areas. Many farmers cannot afford imported fertiliser and fuel. Meanwhile, urban workers face higher food prices, without corresponding wage increases, and those without regular work are even worse off. Tanzania's leaders have governed a nation free from major conflict, yet still face many challenges in providing prosperity for their people.

## WORLD VISION AUSTRALIA IN TANZANIA

- supports more than 70,000 children, their families and communities through child sponsorship to access clean water, improved school facilities and health care
- trains farmers in agricultural training and environmental restoration (eg. tree planting), and assists families to start small businesses
- provides health programs including immunisation, nutrition and hygiene education and trains local health workers
- educates communities on how to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS and support AIDS sufferers and their families
- provides emergency supplies to families affected by drought or floods.

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