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Tullan Willén, systems developer at Braviken's IT department and member of Insikt's editorial board, has been on an exciting trip to Africa. She describes here part of her adventure. Have you also taken part in anything out of the ordinary? Why not put on paper your recollections and send them to Insikt, together with a photo or two.



My adventure

Now that my children have flown the nest, I have at last had an opportunity to go on several long journeys to various parts of the world. In January I went with the travel firm *Läs och Res* (Read and Travel) to Tanzania. I chose them because they have a long tradition of being close to nature and the local population of the countries they visit.



At the summit of Kilimanjaro. Tullan in the centre in a red jacket, together with some of her fellow travellers.

UNKNOWN GERMAN TOURIST

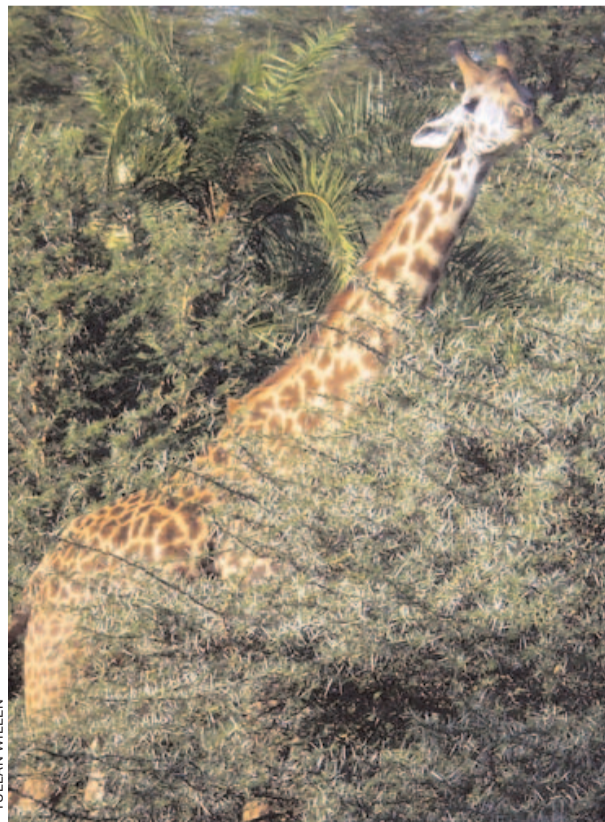
A tough climb to a cold summit

Our tour leader, Hamisi Gyori, is an expert in trees and normally works for the Tanzanian state forestry department. His main interest lies in protecting the rain forest from illegal logging. It is very difficult to control the private forest owners, according to him. Buying a copy of *The Guardian*, I saw it had been printed in Tanzania. Hamisi said that the state also owns a pulp and paper mill. The raw material is mainly

cypress (*cypressus lusitanica*) and various varieties of conifer. Tanzania has Africa's largest plantation of trees for the manufacture of pulp and paper. There was an enormous variety of acacia. We tried to learn to recognise them during our tough journey on foot through the roadless Massai territory. It comprised a four-day walk, which was an adventure in itself, with donkeys as pack animals, the minimum of water, a very hot sun and not another white person to be seen.

No cause for concern
 We spent almost a week in the company of our mountain guides and at no time was there any cause for concern. If any problem cropped up, it could be solved. They taught us a few important phrases in Swahili. If someone says "Mambo?" (how are you?), you should reply "Poa kama ndizi!" (as soft as a banana).

In Africa it's easy to get close to wild animals. The giraffe is grazing on an acacia tree.



TULLAN WILLEN

Fast porters
 The climb up the slopes of Kilimanjaro was different. Here we were far from being the only tourists, which was most noticeable at the starting point, where people from a lot of countries were gathered. The entire event was an experience in itself. Our company of thirteen Swedes was now joined by five mountain guides, two cooks and twenty-six porters (mine was called Leon). On each day of the walk the porters went ahead of us. By the time we reached the next camp, they had put up the tents and they handed over our luggage to us. We sat on stools round a table in the food tent and ate fresh food prepared on a paraffin stove. Everything had been brought along by the porters and we felt like royalty – or colonisers, I would often think. On the other hand, however, we created employment and incomes for quite a lot of people. We ourselves walked unbelievable slowly. This is the way to avoid altitude sickness, moving slowly and taking many days to do it. We went through a rain forest, alpine moorland and lava deserts, the last bit being the toughest. We only got a few hours' sleep at the highest camp of Barafu, at a temperature of minus five Celsius. At 11.30 we got up and at midnight started the seven-hour long walk to the summit, 5,895 metres above sea level, where we were met by snow, sun and a temperature of minus fifteen.

This tells you something about the attitude to life in this peaceful country. During my short stay there I was struck time after time by how uncomplicated life can be. It seems mostly to be a question of attitude. On the long bus journey between Moshi and Dar Es Salaam I fell into conversation with the woman in the seat beside me. We had a long talk about the peaceful people of Tanzania. "I've been thinking of the fact that the oldest traces of the human race can be found here," I said. "This is the cradle of humanity. Why did human beings originate in this particular place? Because conditions here were most favourable, naturally!"
We never plan
 "That's right, we've no need to worry about anything," my new acquaintance continued, "and we never plan! If I invite two people to a party, I make enough food for ten, and then twenty people come along! Anyone who wants to come is invited! And the next day I see that there is no food at home, although there's always some mango to be found!"
 "This must be how we're intended to live," I said. "You who live here represent the origin of mankind! All the rest of us are simply variants, with a neutral colour."
 My friend agreed. "Come back, then," she said. "To the cradle of humanity. To the original model of life."
 I am still considering her suggestion. □