



Berichte und Impressionen

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FACES OF MPUAI- TALEK MAASAI MARA

JOEL & NORMESHUKI MPATIANY

Joel and Normeshuki is a very young couple with only two children but they already have to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of their extended family. Joel who works as a security guard in one of the camps has 3 school going siblings and 4 other relatives living with him and his family. With a herd of only 10 cows and 20 sheep and goats, Joel is not well off by Maasai standards and has to supplement the family's income with his salaried job at the camp. As we settle down on a makeshift bench outside their 3-roomed house, I notice she does her cooking outside under a tree and not inside the house. On enquiring, she tells me the house is too small for all of them and they have to take the 'cooking' outside until they are able to afford an expansion of the house. As the wife gets ready for the interview, Joel converses with my colleague Josphat about thieving leopard that has been stealing away lambs and kids from their homestead for the past 3 weeks. I shudder...to think they live just a few meters from our base camp! Finally Normeshuki is ready and we get on with our interview.

Q: What type of fuel do you use for cooking?

A: I use firewood.

Q: How and where do you source for it?

A: We collect the wood from the bushes and forest nearby.

Q: Do you have a toilet and bathroom?

A: No we don't.

Q: What do you use for lighting in your house?

A: We use kerosene lamps made from a bottle and a strip of cloth.

Q: How much do you spend on kerosene per week?

A: I spend about 150 shillings per week and even this is not adequate for lighting up all the rooms in our house.

Q: What are the most common diseases/infections that affect your family members?

A: Malaria, Colds and Flu.

Q: Do you treat them in hospital or using traditional medicine?

A: Normally we use traditional medicine and only go to hospital as a last resort if there is no improvement.

Q: Did you deliver your children in hospital or at home with the help of a traditional birth attendant?

A: At home with a traditional midwife.

Q: What are the common livestock diseases you have to deal with?

A: Foot & Mouth disease, Trypanosomiasis, and East Coast Fever.

Q: Do you have access to veterinary services for them?

A: Yes, we call in a veterinary officer from Sekenani district administration office to treat the cases we cannot handle.

Q: What local preventive measures do you use to manage livestock diseases?

A: We buy medicine from agro vet shops and administer them ourselves to the livestock.

Q: Where do you graze your livestock?

A: In the buffer zones between the conservancy and the reserve except for the dry spells when we migrate with our livestock to as far as Tanzania in search for pastures. This past year has been so bad, we even had to graze at night in the reserve and conservancy to evade arrest by the rangers for trespass.

Q: What do you envision in the future for your livestock; will you maintain the sizes or reduce them?

A: We will be forced to reduce our livestock sizes for lack of where to graze them. Five years back this area was covered by bushes and forest; we grazed our land anywhere since it was all communal land. Today we have homesteads all round with fencing. We cannot graze on private land but neither can we keep up the annual long distance migration in search of pastures- who will take care of our wives and children back home while we are away?

Q: What do you need most at a subsidized cost to make your life easier?

A: • Biogas digester
• Toilet & bathroom

Q: Besides the 3 options listed, what other 3 things do you wish for?

A: • Water tank
• Upgrade/reinforcement for his livestock enclosure/ kraal to counter predators.
• Expansion of their house to incorporate a kitchen in the house

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