

BAKENGA MAKSDI

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Last updated January 2026

RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research interests center on human-nature relations, socio-ecological dynamics, and environmental studies, with a focus on environmental anthropology, history, education, humanities, and landscape management. I am particularly intrigued by the complex interplay between humans and their environment in both urban and rural contexts. My work explores how these interactions influence other species, shape socio-cultural practices, affect ecosystem material flows, and contribute to habitat degradation.

EDUCATION

2023 –	PhD in Anthropology – Current Candidate University of Calgary (UofC) Stream: Sociocultural Anthropology Specialisation: Environmental History – Development & Sustainability	Calgary, AB
2022	MPhil in Environmental Humanities University of Cape Town (UCT) Thesis Title: “Hippopotami in a Liminal Space: A Multi-Species Ethnography of Lake Tanganyika in Bujumbura” Specialisation: Environmental Humanities	Cape Town, WC
2019	Bachelor of Education Honours University of Cape Town (UCT) Project Title: “Factors influencing mobile device usage and its relationship to the academic performance: A mixed method study of postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) students at UCT” Majors: Education Technology & Policy	Cape Town, WC
2013	Postgraduate Certificate in Education University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Specialised teaching courses: Economics & Management Science	Pinetown, KZN
2012	Bachelor of Commerce University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Majors: Economics and Supply Chain Management	Durban, KZN
2007	Certificate in Business Administration University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)	Pietermaritzburg, KZN

SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS & HONORS

2024	Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarship (AGES) – International, University of Calgary
2023	Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) Entrance Scholarship, University of Calgary
2023-27	FGS International Graduate Tuition Award (minimum), University of Calgary
2023-27	Department of Anthropology and Archaeology funding (minimum), University of Calgary
2020	Honoured for the Best Joint Paper and Presentation, Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) in collaboration with the University of Cape Coast

2020	UCT Plus Bronze Award for Leadership through Role-modelling, University of Cape Town
2020-22	MasterCard Foundation Scholarship, University of Cape Town
2020	DSF National Research Foundation Innovation Master's Scholarship
2019	Council Honours Merit and Financial Aid Awards, University of Cape Town
2017	Swedish Institute Study Scholarships (SISS)
2010-12	Financial Aid (Loan), University of KwaZulu-Natal
2010-11	HCI Foundation Bursary
2008-09	DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) Scholarship

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2021	Research Project: Course – Minor Dissertation Achievements: the ability to observe, trace, conduct interviews, focus groups, water testing, transcribe, and data analysis.
2020	Research Project: Course – Summer School Achievements: the ability to organise and set up group meetings (Zoom), research, and collaborate on e-magazine editions and presentations.
2020	Research Essay: Course – Earth Ecology Humanities Achievements: the ability to do desk research and interact with data related to climate change, and socio-environmental issues locally and globally.
2019	Research Project: Course – Doing Research in Education Achievements: the ability to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research, transcribe, organised and analysed data using thematic analysis and SPSS.

EMPLOYMENT/EXPERIENCE

2025-26	Digital Mentorship Intern Development Education Action (DEA) – (Bujumbura) Role: Support the development of DEA's digital learning ecosystem by helping design accessible online learning materials, assisting with website development and social media management, and co-facilitating monthly education-and-entrepreneurship workshops. Contribute to expanding community access to digital mentorship, especially for learners in remote areas.
2024-25	Vice President-Finance (Volunteer) - (Calgary, AB) University of Calgary, Graduate Anthropology and Archaeology Student Association (GAASA) Role: Oversee the financial operations of the Association, including budgeting, expenditure monitoring, and ensuring compliance with non-profit guidelines. Serve as a signing authority, provide regular financial reports, and act as a secondary representative at departmental or GRC meetings as needed.
2023-	Teaching Assistant (Calgary, AB) University of Calgary, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology Role: Grading, creating questions for D2L Quizzes and Mid-terms, consultations with students for course help. Achievements: Enhanced my time management and student engagement skills by working with the instructor to create and carry out a practical strategy.
2020-23	Computer Laboratory Assistant (Cape Town, WC) University of Cape Town, Humanities Central Technology Unit Achievements: understanding of computer software & hardware by taking part in lab maintenance, ability to regulate human conduct by enforcing Lab rules, and communication skills through orientations and reporting on Lab issues.

2021-22 **False Bay Natural Reserve Intern** – December to February (Cape Town, WC)
City of Cape Town, Energy, Env. and Spatial Planning, Env. Resource Management
Achievements: understanding of conservation and resource management by taking part in onsite research, rehabilitation, reeds and alien clearing, litter pick up, infrastructure and pathway maintenance, and water quality monitoring.

2020-21 **Mentor - volunteer** (Cape Town, WC)
University of Cape Town, Faculty of Humanities
Achievements: interpersonal and managerial skills through planning and executing regular meetings and following up with mentees. Ability to build supportive relationships as mentees gained confidence through encouragement and guidance.

2018 **Learning Facilitator** – June to November (Boksburg, GP)
Gateway City College SA Proprietary Limited
Achievements: the ability and readiness to accept responsibility for the organization's activities, and to work overtime in assisting the assessor with admin work.

2011 **Media Information Clerk** – November to December (Durban, KZN)
United Nations Climate Change Secretariat, COP 17
Achievements: Ability to work in a multicultural space and network with journalists from different media fraternities by assisting them with plenary speeches, availing daily programmes, and providing logistics.

PUBLICATIONS

Maksudi, B., 2022. Hippopotami in a liminal space: a multi-species ethnography of Lake Tanganyika in Bujumbura. MPhil thesis, Environmental Humanities South, University of Cape Town.
<http://hdl.handle.net/11427/37490>

CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS AND EVENT PARTICIPATION

"Redefining a shared space: the case of coastal communities of Lake Tanganyika in Burundi," 20th Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC), **Paper presentation** (virtual). University of Massachusetts, Amherst, June 16-20, 2025.

"Climate, Conservation and Community: A Transdisciplinary Political Ecology Dialogue," Transdisciplinary Political Ecology Group held at Hunter Student Commons (HNSC), **Participation**. University of Calgary on May 30, 2025.

"Climate Action & Sustainable Livelihoods," Introduction to the study of human society and culture (ANTH 203) undergraduate class, **Guest lecture**, University of Calgary, Calgary, April 3, 2025.

"Hippos in My Backyard: Investigating Riparian Communities Adaptation to Environmental Change," Peer Beyond Graduate Research Conference 2025, **Paper Presentation** (Virtual). University of Calgary, Calgary, on February 20, 2025.

"Rethinking a convivial multi-species community approach for addressing coastal rural-urban land grabbing in the northern basin of Lake Tanganyika, Bujumbura," International Conference on Global Land Grabbing, **paper presentation**. Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia, March 21, 2024.

"Redefining human-wildlife coexistence: Multi-species strategies for Lake Tanganyika's coastal zones in Bujumbura," Anarky Talks, **research presentation**. Dept. of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada, January 17, 2024.

EAGxVirtual Conference – Centre for Effective Altruism, **delegate**, participated in academic research, education, wild animal welfare, **virtual**, October 21-23, 2022.

“Project management principles and practices: What is a project: characteristics and role of the project – Project management processes: initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, and closure – Collaborative communication tools including the Gantt diagram, Google sheets, etc. – Best practices (SMART model).” Storytelling Workshop, **facilitator**, Kit-Hub, Bujumbura, Burundi, June 22, 2021.

“Slow-onset climate processes and internal migration nexus,” Summer School (virtual), **research presentation**. The Association of Commonwealth Universities and the University of Cape Coast, theme: Migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change, August 14, 2020.

<https://www.acu.ac.uk/news/migration-as-an-adaptation-strategy-to-climate-change/>

19th and 20th Annual African Renaissance Conference – Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC), **delegate**, Durban, South Africa, May 25-26, 2017, and May 24-25, 2018.

ORGANISATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2023- **Steward** – Volunteer (Calgary, AB)
University of Calgary, Graduate Labour Union (GLU): **Role**: Assist colleagues in advocating for the work of the GLU and provide support to students seeking information on the workplace and collective agreement.

2023- **Member** (South Africa, RSA)
Golden Key International Honour Society: Networking, workshops and training, and scholarships and awards

2022- **Member** (Global Social Movement)
Centre for Effective Altruism: network, exchange ideas, develop skills.

2020- **Ambassador & Researcher** (Bujumbura, BJM)
Kit Digital Innovation Hub Burundi: Promote social and professional development activities.

2020 **Member** (Global Social, Professional & Learning Community)
Baobab – MasterCard Foundation Partner

2012-13 **Assistant Secretary** (Durban, KZN)
KwaZulu-Natal Burundian Community: assist refugees & asylums with applications, appeal processes, and strategies to Integrate into the South African Community.

COURSES/TRAINING AND SEMINARS ATTENDED

2025 **Research Communications day 2025** workshop, Faculty of Graduate Studies (May 29, 2025)

2024 **TCPS 2: CORE-2022** (MOOC Course on Research Ethics, May 12, 2024) – The interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics

2024 **Community Helpers Program**, (In person, February 26) – Alberta Health Services

2024 **Monitoring Land Use**, (Virtual, February 1-2) – WEkEO

2023 **Early and Emerging African Research Scholars Training Online Academy**, (July 10-14) – Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

2022 **Designing for Change**: Environmental Education Research and Practice (Online, Nov to Dec) – Sandford University & edX

2022 **Introduction to EA syllabus** (Virtual, October to December) – Centre for Effective Altruism

2022 **UNITE - Summer School** (Virtual, 19-23 September) University of Cologne

2022 **Ecosystem Restoration** (MOOC, September to October) – Learning for Nature, UNDP

2022 **Integrating Spatial Planning** (MOOC, Oct to Nov) Learning for Nature, UNDP

2022 **Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems** (GIS) - (Virtual) LinkedIn Learning

2021	SDG Africa Summit - New Approaches to Teaching & Building Capability (Virtual) –UCT
2021	Connecting Across Continents & Cultivating 21st Century Work Skills – (Virtual) – Slate Inc.
2020	Summer School - The Migration Generation? Youth & Refugees, ACU (Virtual)
2019	Leadership Development & Leadership in Context – (Course) UCT & Stellenbosch University
2017	Understanding Climate Change - YALI Network (Virtual)
2017	Participatory Photography Workshop – (Course) Zoë-Life
2010	Leadership & Development Program – (Course) University of KwaZulu-Natal
2010	Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) – (Training) University of KwaZulu-Natal