



Office of Field Operations handler James Hopper, right, guides a Tanzanian customs inspector through a canine exercise.

Photo by Tim Ryan

CBP's instructors encouraged Tanzanian law enforcement to net-work across offices and agencies to overcome some long-standing bureaucratic hurdles that hindered collaboration and sharing resources. "The value of using in-person visits and casual conversations to build cross-organizational relationships and trust is important," said Ron Reichel, who served an 18-month detail in CBP International Affairs as acting director of the Africa Division.

TRAINING BEGINS

When the program launched in May 2015, Tanzania selected four of its most promising police officers for training in El Paso.

Belgian malinois, which resemble German shepherds, were selected for the job because the breed withstands heat and adapts to rough terrain, "the optimal dog to be deployed in Africa," said instructor and course developer Benjamin Gutierrez.

For 30 days Gutierrez and Hopper drilled the Tanzanian officers in

how to train canines. It was also the first time CBP trained dogs to detect ivory. Not surprisingly, teaching animals to sniff ivory requires ivory, so the instructors obtained a 4-foot tusk and some crushed ivory seized by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Service.

Training emphasized skills needed in Tanzania because the officers would be on their own when they returned. Tanzania has few veterinarians so they learned first aid for dogs and other medical care. They also learned how to command the canines to search and recognize the scents of drugs and ivory. Teaching canines how to examine containers, luggage and other objects was stressed since the officers will work at both Tanzania's seaport and airport, Hopper said.

Enforcing Tanzania's poaching ban, gathering intelligence and building confidence were also part of the plan.

"It's truly been an honor to be part of their instructor cadre," Gutierrez said, noting how he became close to the Tanzanian officers during

that time, learning about their families and personal concerns. "We started as strangers and have become family."

THE CELEBRATION

When the officers returned home, the four trained canines were officially presented to the Tanzanian government in a stately ceremony officiated by Jumanne Maghembe, the minister of Natural Resources and Tourism.

Officials and guests sat under a blue tent on seats fitted with white satin covers as handlers guided the dogs, one at a time, along a green carpet runway in a show of prowess. Several boxes were spread out along the lane, one containing simulated contraband.

Tugging hard on their leashes, the malinois rushed forward. They probed. They pried. They panted. They darted between, around and on top of every box, sniffing ceaselessly with upturned noses. A narrator sounding more like a sports announcer, explained each move.

Suddenly, the canine's gusto ceased and it quickly sat next to a box.

The officer reached into the container and held up the prize, about a foot-long white plastic pipe. The spectators applauded.

From his podium on the other side of the runway, Maghembe addressed the visitors and CBP's trainers and officials. "We deeply appreciate efforts that the U.S. government is taking to cooperate with our government to ensure the survival of these big wildlife populations," he said.



Demonstrating a canine's newly learned skill to detect ivory.

Photo by Tim Ryan

For the officers, their canines became more friends than working animals. "The four Tanzanian handlers were so excited to see the dogs again after the training in Texas," recalled Chargé Blaser. "The security of the program rests with the relationship those police officers have with their canine partners. That's what CBP helps them to realize."

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