**INTERPLAY OF CULTURES – Zanzibar Studio 2019 10.12.2018**

**Course Themes / Tasks**

*Open and public space*

Public space is an important part of urban Zanzibar today. As new areas of the town will be densified, the need to have good, safe and inclusive public space will be seen very soon. New Urban Agenda target public space, but the government of Zanzibar wants to enhance the richness of the values and uses of public space. The improvement and preservation of public space in the new urban areas is of importance for the promotion of the cultural heritage of the place. Public spaces present not only particular urban environmental qualities but also certain accompanying patterns of social activities and behaviors.

**Zanzibar should be a compact, livable, walkable and inclusive city, as envisioned in the National Spatial Development Strategy. How can that be achieved and how will the new city center reflect that ambition? The new Zanzibar city is forging its identity at its critical moment of high population growth. How can one transform the challenge of the growth as an opportunity for the development of the Zanzibar city?**

*Economic vibrancy of the city*

As per 2012 census, 40 % of the population of Zanzibar is below the age of 15 year. How could cities and towns take opportunity of a potential and abundance of creative and entrepreneurial population? Despite the challenges of rapid urban growth, the city wants to welcome the human resource, and provide opportunities for increased livelihoods. However, major changes in the urban structure are required, to include the growing economic sprawl of small and medium sized businesses. How could these activities be integrated in the new center of activities in the city of Zanzibar?

**How to incorporate informal businesses and the entrepreneurial ambition of the population in an inclusive way, providing possibilities for economic growth and opportunity? Studying people’s way of living and the Zanzibari culture can reveal directions for future development of the economic opportunities, combined with urban structure and street life.**

*Institutional and public buildings*

The government of Zanzibar has an ambition to make Zanzibar city a vibrant hub of culture for East Africa. The newly signed project of the Green Corridor is an example of that ambition. New solutions to include public-private ownership and different new material options for construction are needed, as there is a lack of sand on the island and concrete constructions will be a challenge in the future.

**The new city center of Zanzibar town will need a number of public buildings. There are existing ones, that need up-grading and in addition new public buildings and mixed-use buildings will be needed.**

*Affordable housing*

Zanzibar Government is searching for solutions to solve the challenge of housing provision. The prevailing tendency features fast urban sprawl with gentrification and gated communities and exclusive neighborhoods. Yet, the aim is to have an inclusive city with mixed neighborhoods and preserved urban cultural heritage.

**New solutions to densify existing housing areas are needed, incorporating the existing inhabitants of the neighborhood. How will the future housing solutions keep the vibrancy of a Swahili community within a new envelop of modern materials, comfort and function? There is a big need for new models of finance of mixed use and affordable housing, to find financial solutions is part of the exercise. New materials and methods for construction would need to be incorporated, to consider the lack of sand on the island and allow for innovative and more sustainable construction methods and materials in the future.**

*Flood and resilience*

In the last three years, Zanzibar has experienced floods in several areas. The reasons are known: heavy rains and poor, uncontrolled urbanization. Many wet lands and retention areas have been urbanized. The new planning has to offer a clear picture of the resilience of the new city. Zanzibar town is low, close to sea level. There are already at this point, before all effects of global warming are known, areas of the city that have problems during the rainy season.

**Careful environmental analysis is needed to guide sustainable urban development, as well as concrete solutions to make Zanzibar city less vulnerable.**

**Possible areas / sites**

for Aalto University’s Interplay of Cultures Zanzibar Studio 2019

(in order of preference)

1. *Chuini area*

The Zanzibar Master Plan suggest the development of sub-centers, or nods, for future densification of the city. One important area for such a sub-center is the Chuini area, situated on the coastal line north from the Zanzibar City Centre.

The Chuini area has a diversity of features, which need to be considered in the urban planning. It is one of the important hydrological outlets of the island, with many small streams leading the waters to the sea. It has fertile agricultural land, and wetlands not suitable for construction. Yet the city wants to develop the area to maximum density.

The environmental conditions of the area need to be studied carefully, to allow sustainable and environmentally sensitive urban growth of the area. Detailed planning of housing, public space and buildings is required to help the city in directing the development.

1. *Green Corridor*

Together with the World Bank, the City of Zanzibar has developed a project called the Green Corridor Plan. This includes developing green urban areas along the Michenzani Road, a major street cutting through the area of Ng’ambo, which is to become the new center for the city.

Green walkways and separated traffic areas will characterize the new Green Corridors. New public buildings and inclusive urban structure need to be designed along the corridor, to enhance the well-being, safety and economic opportunities of the citizens. The newly design public building will also give a modern character of the Zanzibar city.

1. *Green Network*

Informed by the Green Network group’s studio work done in spring 2018, the group will further develop the network of urban green areas. Using the newly produced geospatial data, detailed planning of green urban areas should be proposed. This includes walkable and inclusive public spaces, combined with local knowhow on appropriate vegetation, suitable for urban areas.

1. *Jang’ombe Green Boulevard*

Jang’ombe Green Boulevard is a project currently executed by the city and the World Bank. The aim is to revitalize the urban street life to include green walkways and small businesses. The Jang’ombe Street has been widened with 12 meters from one side of the street. The houses along the cut line have been demolished, some cut partially, or even in the middle. This has left the street façade “wounded” and rough.

The task is to design new densified housing along the street façade, including small business opportunities and public space.

1. *Nods*

According to the Zanzibar Master Plan, the city wants to develop sub-centers, or nods, for future densification of the city. The development of these nods is in need of environmental analyses of soil and hydrology, and consideration of their socio-cultural and economical aspects.

The areas of Kilimani, Mazizini and Mwanakwerekwe in the near vicinity of the city center have been identified as future nods, having the most urgent need of development. The task is to propose new concepts and detailed plans for housing and public space & buildings.