



Ng'ambo, mji wa kisasa uliotunza hadhi yake: Inawezekana!

Ng'ambo, a town ready for a future anchored in its values. It is possible!

International Expert Workshop & Stakeholder Conference

11 – 13 Feb 2014, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR HUL INITIATIVE

Introduction

Zanzibar town is at a crucial time of its development, where economic progress, a growing middle class, and changing aspirations lead to increased pressure on land, natural resources, the historic environment, urban infrastructure, housing and the quality of community life. Investors are keen and isolated projects are plentiful, but the coordination between them is challenging. There is a real concern for the future sustainability of urban Zanzibar, including the economy, environment and society, which are permeated by the unique regional culture.

With land being a very scarce resource on the island of Zanzibar, it is important to plan for equitable land uses, control urban sprawl and to develop new visions for sustainable urban and rural development. For urban areas this vision may include densification, provision of services and quality urban environment to create compact, mixed communities and uses and liveable urban areas. For rural areas a territorial perspective may address quality of life for villages and farms, sound stewardship of land with economic viability, and care for a healthy environment providing for an alternative to urban living. Important planning tools currently are being drafted following new *National Land Use Plan: Enabling Transformation of Zanzibar*. The public and private sector, including the communities, are actively seeking inspiration, guidance and best practices, bringing forward a real opportunity for Zanzibar to shape its urban future in a locally rooted yet visionary approach, that is integrated with the future plans for Zanzibar Island.

A key resource in this development is the historic environment of Zanzibar, designated as Stone Town World Heritage Property, but including the lesser known Swahili settlement of Ng'ambo, which today is becoming the most central part of Zanzibar town. This area carries an historic character and heritage values, for its central role in the 1964 revolution, including the most prominent vision of Karume's social housing project Michenzani. Besides, it is also part of the buffer zone of the World Heritage property. In addition, the wider urban area of Zanzibar hosts further areas of iconic, historic, natural or social value, including for example its former botanic gardens or the water catchment areas of Masingini forest.

The Government of Zanzibar has, for the past years, been dedicated to finding and testing planning and urban development approaches that build on the Island's culture, character and historic strengths, while integrating existing and future pressures and aspiration of growth, wealth and happiness. It has been a supporter of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), even before the Recommendations official adoption by the UNESCO Member States on 10 November 2011, by



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hosting two international workshops in December 2009 and August 2011. These resulted in the 2009 *Zanzibar Recommendation*, guiding the creation of the HUL Recommendation, and the 2011 report on *Historic Urban Landscapes on the Swahili Coast of Africa*. The 2011 report includes an analysis of local problems and threats in the three historic towns of Island of Mozambique (Mozambique), Lamu (Kenya) and Zanzibar (URT), results and challenges, as well as a list of recommendations for each of these towns¹.

The HUL approach, with its great potential to integrate urban development, conservation and quality of life in Zanzibar, including N'gambo, the city centre and rural territory, has become a central approach favoured by the Department of Urban and Rural Development (DoURP) in Zanzibar. With the UNESCO General Conference recommending the monitoring of the HUL impacts and the World Heritage institutions asking for examples of best practices and encouraging mainstreaming of HUL, Zanzibar has taken a leadership role in testing this new recommendation in the African context. Anticipating the inclusion of HUL progress in the UNESCO General Conference in 2015, Zanzibar, and its collaborators along the Swahili Coast, can target solid progress and reporting out on HUL mainstreaming in late 2014. This would, in turn, be a potential contribution to UNESCO's plan to promote the HUL approach and mainstreaming progress as an important indicator to assess the sustainability of urbanization, within the UN Habitat strategy for the next 20 years.

Building on the 2011 HUL East Africa report, Zanzibar is promoting partnerships and research cooperation in view of identifying and testing tools and processes adapted to the context of Zanzibar such as civic engagement tools, knowledge and planning tools, regulatory systems and financial tools. Initiatives include the exchange, since 2012, with the **City of Amsterdam** on public-private initiative of 'Stadherstel', which resulted in the ongoing formation of "**Hifadhi Zanzibar**", a **Zanzibar-based company aiming at heritage-based urban regeneration** through the renewal of buildings and urban spaces. Exchange with **various universities** in Tanzania and abroad can attract under- and post-graduate students to conduct HUL-related research with Zanzibar as the case study. In cooperation with the **Swiss Landscape Architecture Association**, a process of fostering the role of urban open and green spaces as tools for local identification and acupuncture for community-led urban regeneration is being explored.

One pilot project to mainstream the HUL approach to urban development and regeneration in Zanzibar is the joint initiative on Ng'ambo | The Other Side | Heritage-based Urban Regeneration Zanzibar started in early 2013, led by **UNESCO, Government of Zanzibar and AAmatters**. Funded by the Government of Zanzibar and the UNESCO Netherlands Fund-in-Trust and supported by multiple partners, including AAmatters, the pilot project focuses on a small area of Ng'ambo, aiming to develop a spatial strategy based on cultural values, from universal to communal. This initiative uses and adapts tools and methods of the HUL approach to develop knowledge and visions and to guide the regeneration of Ng'ambo. The main objectives identified were to:

¹ The recommendations are framed along the six critical steps as outlined in the HUL Action Plan (May 2011)



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- understand the historic area of Ng'ambo, its heritage values, character, cultural identities, built environment, socio-economic situation, intangible heritage assets, traditional skills and knowledge, cultural activities, and development aspirations;
- develop visions together with the community and government stakeholders for the urban regeneration and sustainable development of Ng'ambo, keeping in mind its values and character;
- develop planning tools for urban Zanzibar, using the an area of Ng'ambo as a pilot project, considering that Ng'ambo is representative of 75% of the built up area of urban Zanzibar;
- develop a housing development strategy for urban Zanzibar, following a model of sustainable and affordable housing.

The work reported on at the Conference included research for a background study, mapping tangible and intangible heritage, interviewing a sample of some 20 residents in the Kisiwandui – Kisimamajongoo area of Ng'ambo and a community visioning event on February 8 and 9, 2014.

Recommendations

Between February 11 and 13, around 25 experts and students composed of Ng'ambo project team members from Tanzania and abroad gathered at the **International Expert Workshop "Ng'ambo: a town ready for a future anchored in its values. It is possible!"** in Zanzibar to review the first steps of the ongoing project **"Ng'ambo | The Other Side | Heritage-based Urban Regeneration Zanzibar"** and comment on the implementation of the HUL approach, and the achievements of this project and related activities in inventorying and defining patterns of urbanization eminent in Zanzibar.

On February 12, this workshop grew to a well-attended **Stakeholder Conference** of over 100 participants from Zanzibar, mainland Tanzania, East Africa and further abroad. This Conference offered a platform to listen to experts' voices, provide input and debate the pilot case of heritage-based regeneration of Ng'ambo, as well as, Zanzibar's heritage and urban development in general.

Experts were present from UNESCO, Dar es Salaam office and the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, IFLA and BSLA (Swiss Landscape Architecture Association), AAMatters, the State University of Zanzibar, the Department of Urban and Rural Planning, Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority (STCDA), Ardhi University of Dar es Salaam, Chalmers University, Sweden, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, City of Lamu, Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands, University of Pretoria, South Africa and Sheffield University of the UK and esteemed independent speakers with HUL expertise. Participants included the head of the Zanzibar planning team and many local officials.

The participants received reports on the background study, mapping and visioning of the Ng'ambo project, walked the project area, heard presentations on HUL and case examples addressing Lamu and the Island of Mozambique.



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These papers and field walks fostered a dialogue that yielded detailed comments and the following recommendations by a smaller group of experts and students:

- 1. Sustainability and Culture**, as expressed in the recent resolution of the UN General Assembly on Culture & Sustainable Development² and upheld in the HUL approach, are intrinsically linked in that culture is *'an enabler and driver of sustainable development and 'an essential component of human development' [it] represents a source of identity, innovation and creativity for the individual and the community and (...) it is an important factor in social inclusion and poverty eradication'*. It is also *'an important contribution to the sustainable development of local communities, peoples and nations, empowering them to play an active and unique role in development initiatives'*³. As cultural resilience is linked directly to community resilience in the face of many contemporary pressures, in order to uplift society, **the workshop commends the project's focus on the diverse Zanzibari culture, embodied by people of all ages, their practices and traditions, as a key resource, driver and enabler of sustainable urban regeneration in Zanzibar and encourages the deepening and strengthening of this valuable approach.**
- 2. Good governance is integrated governance**, which is an important contributor to sustainable urban areas. **The workshop recommends Zanzibar to continue applying the HUL approach, fostering the cooperation between government departments and stakeholders so that their complementary efforts and actions are better coordinated and more effective. The HUL approach should also be applied to foster the continuity and sustainable interconnection between urban, peri-urban and rural Zanzibar, which are linked through landscape and culture.**
- 3. Mainstreaming HUL.** HUL offers a diversity of tools for 21st century cities and their broader settings. HUL enables communities to apply appropriate methods to their city and region that empower them to conserve, develop, sustain and add resilience. The workshop has shown that the Planning Department is committed to using the HUL approach. However wider mainstreaming of HUL and integrating conservation with planning and urban management as a policy in Zanzibar and the absence of certain relevant departments and agencies showed that this is still an uphill task. **The workshop therefore recommends that the mainstreaming process of the HUL approach in Zanzibar be brought forward and that both challenges and successes are shared internationally to aid regional and global progress on the implementation of the HUL approach.**
- 4. Apply diverse tools.** The project started exploring a variety of tools as part of the four HUL Tool categories, which are *community engagement, knowledge and planning, regulatory systems and financial tools*. For Zanzibar, meaningful engagement of the diverse community, with a special focus on youth, should be central to applying HUL tools. Noting that lists of requisite tools are available internationally, the workshop experts offered support in proposing and sorting tools and experiences relevant to Zanzibar's and Ng'ambo's realities. **The workshop recommends that the HUL community**

² 68/223 of December 2013 building on: [65/166](#) of 20 December 2010; [66/208](#) of 22 December 2011, concerning culture and development; and [66/288](#) of 27 July 2012, entitled "The future we want"

³ UNGA 68/223 2/7



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at large should develop a platform to share tools and experiences and learn from each other⁴; special attention should be given to social media and digital technologies.

5. **Local values and Outstanding Universal Values can be closely related.** Ng'ambo is not just buffer zone, but is in itself of historic, architectural and social value. The patterns of urbanization seem similar to the early patterns of urbanization defined for the Stone Town World Heritage property. The Ng'ambo identity has emerged through the mapping, visioning and community engagement efforts yet fragmented due to gaps in documentation. **The workshop recommends conducting further surveys on values and attributes to deepen the understanding of Ng'ambo and its community, to capture and aid its positive transformation as the pace of change increases, but also to strengthen its independent role and as an added layer of protection to the safeguarding of the Stone Town.**
6. **Good participatory approaches are inclusive and continuous.** Stone Town and Ng'ambo have seen ample community consultations over the years; however the follow-ups and relation between them are less obvious. **The workshop strongly recommends building institutional knowledge, preventing future repetition of efforts and consultation fatigue in the community.**
7. **Community engagement** reaches far beyond simple consultation. It fosters **inclusive community action and local responsibility for development** and includes harnessing the potential of the youth,. The workshop appreciates the project's endeavor to create local dynamics and empower the community for them to launch community-based individual and common initiatives to enhance their physical, social and economic environment. Building trust and consensus must go hand-in-hand with ongoing active collaboration to integrate community planning and community actions. **The workshop recommends that community participation, youth engagement, interventions and implementation should be planned and carried out as parallel processes continuously demonstrating results that yield outcomes for the common good.**
8. **Establishing priorities and measuring performance.** Applying a Zanzibari HUL approach can be taking place step by step, given the limited capacities available to address extraordinary challenges. **The workshop however recommends that individual initiatives should be based on stakeholder consensus, agreed objectives and shared priorities. As each initiative is implemented on the ground, performance should be measured against these agreed objectives and priorities, so that reliability can be raised and results sharpened.** Data collected on a regular basis can, through analysis, inform future efforts. Performance needs to be tested and assessed so that refinements can be made in future initiatives. Practical approaches should be applied so that the maximum results are achieved with the minimum effort.

⁴ Protected Urban Planet (<http://2011.protectedurbanplanet.net/> | www.protectedurbanplanet.net) was initiated parallel to the 2011 report on Historic Urban Landscapes on the Swahili Coast of Africa, funded by UNESCO Flanders Funds in Trust. It is an online platform being developed - primarily on voluntary basis - to facilitate knowledge and tools exchange worldwide. Eindhoven University of Technology and Durham University are the main contributors to this project, but many other universities have joined as University of Pretoria, Harvard University and TU Cottbus. The further development of Protected Urban Planet could facilitate this knowledge and tool exchange.



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9. **Shared public spaces.** Zanzibar Stone Town and Ng'ambo share the tradition of a rich and sophisticated network of public, semi-public and private open spaces that are key to the sociability of neighborhoods. During mapping and visioning, the inhabitants of the pilot area have strongly expressed that public spaces, places for children, places to share community experience, barazas, and movement corridors, while important and intensely used, today are often derelict and badly maintained, and thus need attention to more fully serve the community. **The workshop recognizes the cultural importance and heritage value of these diverse open spaces of Zanzibar, and highlights the common good that can be served in improving the public spaces of Ng'ambo. It suggests that a first step toward local stakeholder collaboration between local government and Ng'ambo people could be to work together towards cleaning up the pilot neighborhood and begin improvements to public spaces, in accordance with a long term action component to accompany community engagement and vision planning.**

10. **Housing and building development in Ng'ambo.** The prevalent character of Ng'ambo over time is a one-story Swahili townscape with some larger buildings. In recent years, however, new aspirations, growing families and economic changes fuel pressure on construction, which is going forward without clear guidance. Some new buildings could be considered positive as individual works, though also damaging to the character of the urban area. **The workshop recommends that simple and consistent building guidelines are developed and technical assistance offered in a participatory process so as to harmonize and optimize the urban regeneration of Ng'ambo.**

11. **Limited resources are a reality.** Zanzibar is part of a LDC and as such has very limited financial, human and institutional capacity to invest in urban conservation and development. With this in mind, **the workshop commends the current efforts, human talent and concerted energies invested by multiple stakeholders under the vision of the Department of Urban and Rural Planning to conduct the requisite steps to achieve heritage-based conservation and urban regeneration.** The workshop also recognizes Zanzibar's efforts to harness private investment in urban regeneration through the initiative "Hifadhi Zanzibar". **It recommends creating a sturdy framework of cooperation and action, including a strong group of partners and grass-root stakeholders, to bring forward incremental positive change. It notes that there is a prominent role for all people, private and public sectors to take up collaboration in bringing capacity, skills, support and finance to Zanzibar's new vision, and thus also Ng'ambo's, "Urban Re-volution".**

Conclusion

The workshop expressed its hope for a better Ng'ambo integrated with Stone Town in the urban and rural development of Zanzibar, to create a blueprint for the urbanization of Zanzibar while valuing and preserving its unique community. We all shared and learned. In reflecting on this opportunity to discuss HUL Mainstreaming and applying it to Zanzibar and Ng'ambo, the International Expert Workshop wishes to express its gratitude to the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, UNESCO and all partners for their supportive initiative on this, as well as prior work, to steward cultural heritage of East Africa.