



HISTORIC CITIES IN DEVELOPMENT

Centuries of history has moulded the historic cities of Tanzania and Palestine into a cultural fusion of religions, traditions and ethnic groups. Rich and important, Zanzibar, Bethlehem, Hebron and Bagamoyo were truly part of the global village long before the expression was coined.

Despite being separated by language, political and geographical boundaries, there are many things that unite the cities. The turquoise coloured doors, the narrow alleyways with their intense activity. The crumbling façades and leaking roofs, but also the possibilities opening up for the future. The diversity and wealth of heritage is clearly seen in the architecture.

There are also differences. While the present conflict poses a major threat to Palestinian cities, poverty and lack of participation is one of the main challenges in Zanzibar and Bagamoyo. In both cases planning from a democratic perspective and active participation from all stakeholders is a requirement if long-term sustainable development is to be achieved.

A community based rehabilitation process could take on many guises. In Hebron a group of taxi drivers were asked how they would improve the transport situation. They had never heard about city planning before and now had a chance to discuss the problems of their profession. In Zanzibar, people had the chance to express their opinions on the future of the Stone Town in a TV series called Baraza.

It is not enough just to protect a historic city. To preserve the city it must be developed and everybody must have access to basic infrastructure. Tourism and other businesses must expand and the people must be encouraged to live in the old buildings and make use of them.

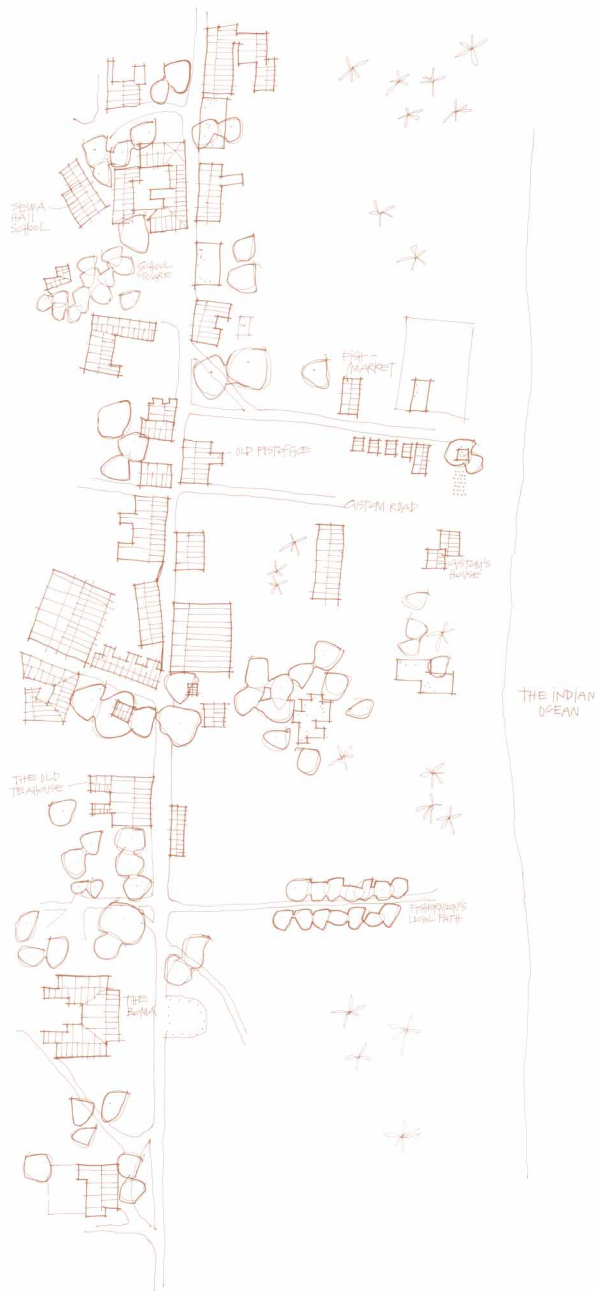
Growth and new development is not necessarily incompatible with the preservation of the cities, on the contrary it can contribute to protecting the cultural heritage while improving the standard of living. With the right methods it is possible to raise the people's awareness of the significance of their surroundings and thus provide a motive to support preservation.

Instead of focusing on individual buildings only, the projects supported by Sida are becoming increasingly oriented towards conservation integrated in the development process. This includes the promotion of local economies as well as social and democratic aspects.

Important steps in this process are:

- Documentation of the city's heritage.
- Support to the preparation of comprehensive urban development plans.
- Teaching people how to repair and preserve the buildings.
- Training crafts people and professionals to take on the rehabilitation.
- Supporting the formation of tenants committees and other grassroots organisations.
- Stimulating the local economy including tourism to lay the foundation for sustainable development.
- Creating job opportunities through a labour intensive process.

BAGAMOYO



HEBRON

Hebron is known as the city of the Patriarch Abraham and therefore holy for both Jews and Muslims. Hebron has a long and turbulent history. Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967 and the arrival of Jewish settlers, the conflict has created difficult living conditions for the population of Hebron and its old town. Many of the old buildings dating back to the 12th century were left unattended by their owners, who had left to live in other places around the world.

In 1995 the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee began an ambitious and sensitively conducted rehabilitation programme. But to achieve sustainable revitalisation, the local economy must also be stimulated. Shops must be restored and houses must once again bustle with activities. Of equal importance is job creation and social programmes.

In Hebron the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the second Intifada has led to limited accessibility for the Palestinian population to the old town of Hebron. The architectural heritage is one of the victims of the political situation.

SIDA SUPPORT: The main purpose of the project is to develop a conservation master plan for the historic centre of Hebron that can help revitalize the traditional old parts economically as well as socially so as to integrate them into rapidly growing new sections of the city.



ZANZIBAR

For centuries Zanzibar was the centre of seafaring activities between Asia and Africa and one of the main slave trading ports in eastern Africa.

Zanzibar's traditional coral stone buildings, narrow bazaar streets, massive carved doors and intricate multi-storied balconies are a living testament to the great variety of influences that helped create its unique blend of history, culture and architecture in what became known as Stone Town. Today, Stone Town has 1,700 buildings and a population of around 16,000.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee added Zanzibar Stone Town to the World Heritage Site list but despite this, the town was left to deteriorate for many years and gradually fell apart. At the same time there is strong pressure for change and scores of new structures have been built during the past ten years.

A conservation plan has now been initiated to reverse the decline and guide future developments in this historic area. A community based rehabilitation programme involving many of the poor inhabitants has also begun and several buildings have been rehabilitated. With tourism expanding, the development of mass tourism could be a future threat to Zanzibar Stone Town.

SIDA SUPPORT: Awareness building among tenants and the rehabilitation of several buildings have been important elements of Sida's support to Zanzibar Stone town.



BETHLEHEM

As a holy place for three religions, Bethlehem is a living symbol for peace and reconciliation. The Bethlehem 2000 Project was launched in 1996 as a development project. The birthplace of Jesus Christ was to prepare itself for a new Millennium. The main goal was to develop Bethlehem and the surrounding district and highlight its universal religious and cultural heritage.

The plan was also to develop the Palestinian tourist industry as a means of jump-starting the Palestinian economy. Infrastructure projects were implemented, architectural and cultural heritage sites were renovated and special efforts were made to promote private sector investment in the region.

One of the lessons learnt from preparing Bethlehem for the millennium celebrations is that it is not possible to carry out sustainable development and restoration work without actively involving the people. Awareness of the Cultural Heritage is now being actively developed among school children.

SIDA SUPPORT: Sida was one of the financiers of the Bethlehem 2000 Project. The contribution included rehabilitation of the Manger Square and construction of a cultural centre "the Peace Centre" next to it. Sida also supported the rehabilitation of two streets and the old vegetable market in the heart of the old town. One important objective was to create job opportunities through labour intensive construction activities.

"Bethlehem's old town lies on a windy, winding ridge
the hills around Jerusalem in the north and



with distance views towards the desert in the east,
King Herod's bizarre desert palace like a volcanic cone in the southeast."

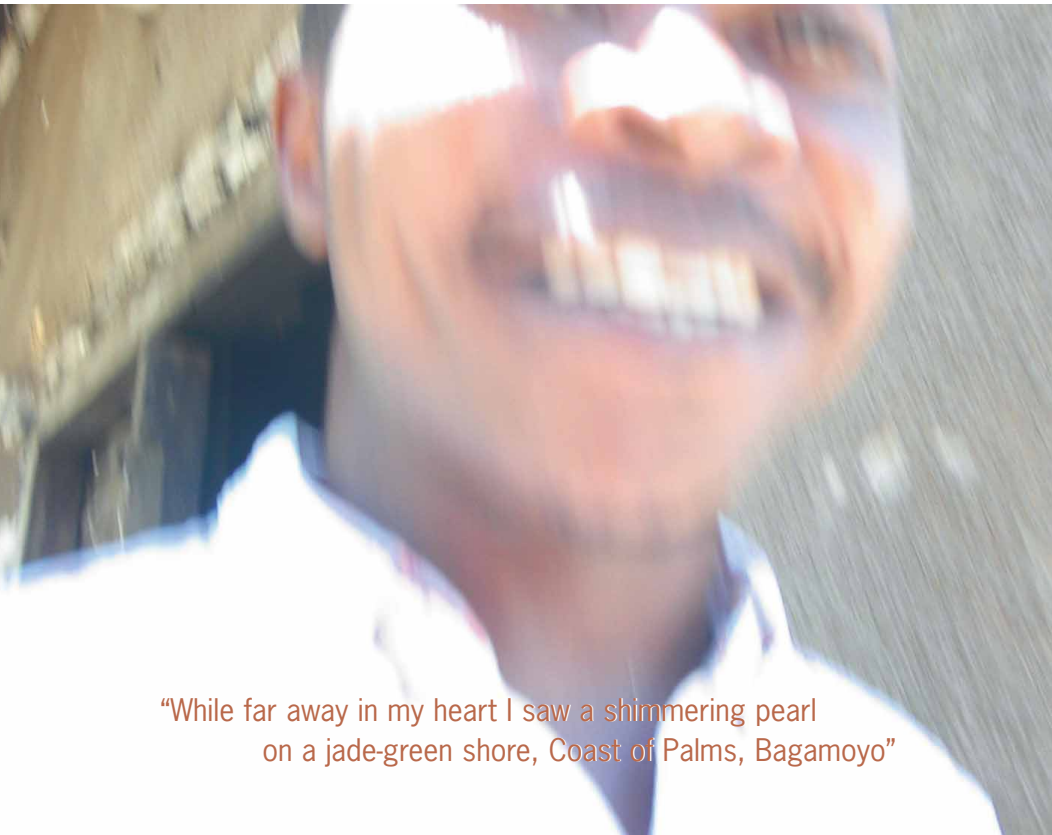
BAGAMOYO

Now a small coastal town with a population of 30,000, Bagamoyo was once the most important trading port for goods and slaves in eastern Africa serving as it did the Arab sultanate of Zanzibar. Thousands of slaves were shipped from Bagamoyo to Zanzibar and for a short period during the 19th century it was the capital of German East Africa.

Bagamoyo's decline set in when the main port was moved to Dar es Salaam, but the Arab, Indian and German buildings still offer a reminder of what was once a great past. Most houses are built in Swahili style, their doors richly decorated in Arabic and Indian style, some of the latter with Elephant spikes of wood or metal, originally intended to scare off elephants trying to enter the buildings.

Bagamoyo is a candidate for the UNESCO World Heritage Site list for its part in the slave trade together with Zanzibar. With just 40km to Zanzibar and 60km to Dar es Salaam, the city has the potential for becoming an attractive tourist destination so it is of vital importance for local people to take part in the development process.

SIDA SUPPORT: Since 1998 Sida has supported a planning process for extensive conservation and development of Bagamoyo that uses a participatory approach.

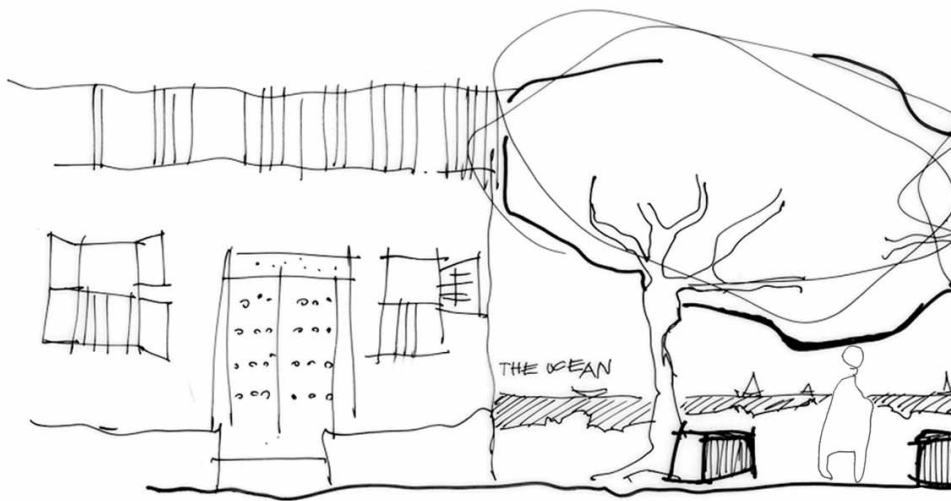


“While far away in my heart I saw a shimmering pearl
on a jade-green shore, Coast of Palms, Bagamoyo”



Sida's support to projects for the preservation of cultural heritage is based on integrated conservation. This includes the promotion of the local economy as well as social and democratic aspects of development and good governance.

READ MORE AT: www.akdn.org/aktc/hcsp_zanzibar.html | www.bagamoyo.wilayani.com | www.bethlehem2000.org | www.bethlehem-city.org/The_Municipality/peace_center.htm | www.riwaq.com



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