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Connecting town & beach in Bagamoyo

Diploma Work and Minor Field Study at
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foreword

This study is a diploma work for the Master's Degree in Spatial Planning at the Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden. A scholarship from SIDA provided me the opportunity to go to Bagamoyo in Tanzania for three months in the beginning of 2005 for a Minor Field Study.

The work has been supervised and examined by Dr. Anita Larsson, Associate Professor at Blekinge Institute of Technology. I have also received invaluable help from inhabitants of Bagamoyo, family and friends.

Martina Pihl, Malmö, August 2005

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INTRODUCTION

introduction

I spent two months in Bagamoyo in 2003 together with the Department of Architecture and Development Studies, LTH/LU when I participated in a project about streetscape of Bagamoyo. I became interested to continue working with spatial planning in Bagamoyo for my diploma work, as the town has as well an interesting history as a future.

The small Swahili coastal town Bagamoyo, has a rich cultural heritage as once one of the most important trading harbours in East Africa. The importance of Bagamoyo stagnated as a new harbour was built in Dar es Salaam in the late 19th century. Today Bagamoyo grows rapidly because of its good connections to Tanzania's most important city Dar es Salaam. Bagamoyo has got a nicer climate, more vegetation and a calmer atmosphere compared to the larger city. Bagamoyo attracts both visitors from Dar es Salaam during the weekends and far away visitors from Europe and other parts of the world. The visitors spend most of their time at the beach, which also is an important working area for the fishing industry. Many people visit Bagamoyo for the historical buildings in the town. Stone town, from the late 19th century, is a potential Cultural Heritage of the World and the visitors of Bagamoyo are expected to increase more in the future if Bagamoyo is accepted.

The beach in Bagamoyo is a great resource not fully used. The sea breeze does however not reach interior parts of the town partly because of vegetation between the beach and the centre. In many places in the inland of Bagamoyo the view over the sea is blocked, only the closest parallel streets to the beach provide a view over the sea. Also the connections between other parts of Bagamoyo are today poor. For a visitor it is difficult to find one's way to different places in town because of this and also because Bagamoyo has no clear structure and few landmarks.

aim of the project

This project is carried out at two different levels. An overall plan concerns how to orientate in the town and the connection between different areas in Bagamoyo and the coast. For a number of places detailed plans are presented. These detailed plans concern the connection between the centre of the town and the coast and the connections to the old Stone town.

The main aim of the project is to enhance the orientation and connections between different areas in Bagamoyo. In order to do this I have come to the conclusion that it is important to find areas or aspects which can work as connectors.

Another aim of the project is to create a public meeting place. A place to gather what Bagamoyo is known for- history, culture and art- and at the same time open one of the historical buildings for the public. Another meeting place which Bagamoyo is in need of, according to me, is a large outdoor space with nice climate and shadow. Also a place to grow plants later used in the streetscape of the town, is suggested in this project.

Short facts about Tanzania:

Area:	945 087 km ²
Population:	35,2 million (2002)
Population in cities:	27% (1999)
Capital:	Dodoma (324 000, official capital) Dar es Salaam (2,5 million, actual capital)
Other cities:	Mwanza (476 000), Zanzibar (391 000), Arusha (283 000), Mbega (266 00) (2002)
Highest mountain:	Kilimajaro (5 896 m)
Largest Lake:	Lake Victoria (69 800 m ²)
Largest Islands:	Zanzibar (1 650km ²), Pemba (984km ²)
Tourists year 2001:	around 0,5 million

my work in bagamoyo

The starting-point for my work is to look at the **connections** between different areas in Bagamoyo, in particular the connection between the central parts of the town and the coast. I also want to look into the growing tourism in Bagamoyo and into Stone town as a potential Cultural World Heritage. How could spatial planning be a tool in this development of Bagamoyo? In order to do this I have chosen places and aspects which I think are important for the development of Bagamoyo.

Initially I tried to find out why **the beach** is not present in other parts of the town. First of all I started to analyse the beach itself. How the beach is used, what activities are going on and who are the people using the beach. I walked the 8 kilometres from Kaole in the south to the large hotels in the northern part of Bagamoyo and observed which activities were taking place at the beach at different times during the day. I made short interviews with people at the beach, inhabitants of Bagamoyo as well as visitors from Dar es Salaam and Europe. I also talked to people working at the hotels in the north to find out what kind of visitors who come to the beach and to Bagamoyo in general.

After finding out how the beach is used and who uses it I looked for the spatial **connections between the beach and the town**. I walked along India Street, the nearest parallel street to the beach and marked at a map the streets heading to the beach. From the inner parts of Bagamoyo there were not many direct connections and no clear views over the sea. From the central parts of Bagamoyo it was not at all obvious how to find the beach, when the streets are crooked and buildings and vegetation block the view over the sea.

When I found **vegetation** as a barrier between the town and the coast I wanted to analyse the use of vegetation in the rest of Bagamoyo. To find out how vegetation is used in the streetscape and if I also could find vegetation not only as a barrier between the town and the coast but as a connector between different areas.

As a visitor it is difficult to find your way to different places in town when Bagamoyo has no clear structure and few landmarks. When you enter Bagamoyo from Dar es Salaam you are all of a sudden in the middle of Bagamoyo. From this junction it is hard to know what street to choose to reach different parts of town. I realised that this place, **the entrance**, is an important place both for orientation in the

town but also for the connection between the city centre and the coast, when this place is situated in the middle between the commercial centre- the New Market, and the beach. I started to look closer at this confusing place. I made a map of activities and users in the streets and nearby buildings. I also counted the number of different kind of vehicles passing the place in different times of the day and which streets are used more than the others.

Between the entrance of the town and the coast, **the boma**, the old German headquarters from 1895, is situated. Below this building in the slope towards the sea there is a large open space with vegetation. I found this building and the open place interesting and well situated in the town for being a part of the connection between the centre and the coast. The Boma can also be used as a connector between the old and the new parts of Bagamoyo. When I started to sketch my proposal I found out that I wanted to make the Boma and the open place in front of the Boma, into a centre for tourism and culture. To be able to design such a **meeting place** for both the people in Bagamoyo and visitors I had to find out how a meeting place in the Swahili culture looks like and how people meet. I walked around in the town looking for different kind of meeting places and made small analyses and observations at the places I found.

To find out more about **tourism** in Bagamoyo and Tanzania I joined a Swedish group travelling with "Läs & Res" for a week together with an architect student, Charlotte Sörman, also in Tanzania for her Diploma work. We observed which places their guide showed them and which places they visited in Bagamoyo in their free time. After the stay in Bagamoyo we joined them to Zanzibar, a popular touring-ground, to be able to compare this place with Bagamoyo. After the visit to Zanzibar we interviewed the whole group to find out about their impressions of Bagamoyo and Zanzibar.

