

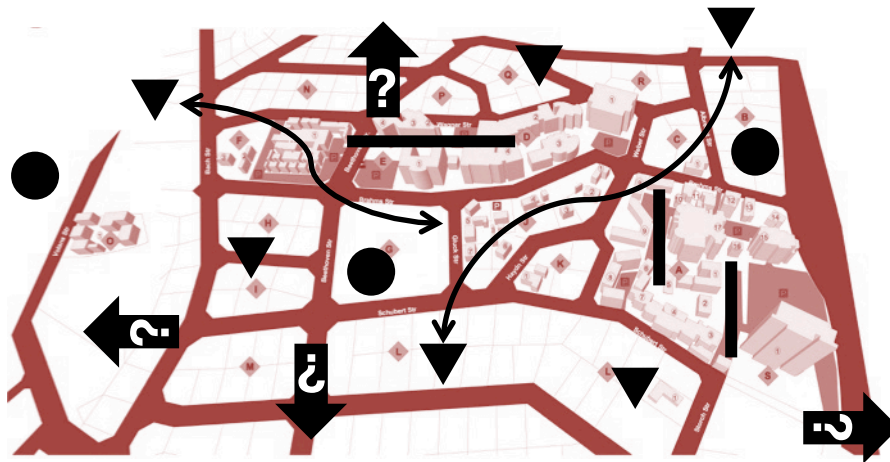
University-led urban transformation

Assessing and re-imagining the development of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) campus in Windhoek.

Project Concept Note

10 February 2016

A collaborative project incorporating research, public outreach, and development of proposals to assess the role that the NUST campus plays in the development of the City and the Windhoek West neighbourhood, as well as to re-imagine a future development in which the university becomes an active agent of progressive and equitable urban transformation



Department of Architecture and Spatial Planning (DASP)
Department of Land and Property Sciences (DLPS)
Integrated Land Management Institute (ILMI)
Namibia Architecture Students' Association (NASA)

Insert logos.

Background (References to be added)

The City of Windhoek currently develops in a strikingly uneven way. Today, it is almost redundant to state that Namibia is currently undergoing an urban land and housing crisis. The vast majority of the population is excluded from formal access to land and housing, and current state-supported efforts seem to have limited effects in this matter. Land and property values are generally exclusive throughout the city, and the University happens to be located in one of the most centric areas of the city. This fact turns the land on which the university stands as “prime property”, which in the current context of limited social protection and lack of mechanisms to ensure urban equity, makes it an area of exclusion towards the largest number.

Students are largely an economically vulnerable group, as their subsistence is dependent on families, or public or private grants. This places them in a particularly precarious situation with regards to housing and recreation options. Staff, particularly that which is sub-contracted and performing the most basic functions at the university, is also in a vulnerable position; perhaps even more so, as they lack the prospects that students can have after completing their university education. Furthermore, the housing situation is at such critical point, that it can be argued that some of the young faculty and visiting guests are also affected in different ways.

However, the issue is not limited to the housing question. Windhoek West stands today largely as a residential and office area, with few accessible spaces for encounter, recreation, and emergence of small local economies. If the current socio-spatial dynamics continue the patterns they’ve been following, there are meagre prospects of open, freely accessible, and affordable spaces to emerge.

The Namibia University of Science and Technology, as a public educational institution, has the opportunity and responsibility of setting an example on how to attain a different, more equitable, vibrant, and innovative urban development. The project concept note below outlines a collaborative approach, going beyond formal master-planning, and engaging with larger questions of land values, urban design, planning processes, and doing so in close collaboration with inhabitants and stakeholders in inclusive and innovative ways.



Student protests contesting registration fees at NUST, January 2016. Source: to be added.

Research

Research will take two different yet complementing pathways. The first one (A) will be geared towards understanding the current state and socio-spatial development of the vicinity of the university (Windhoek West) in relation to the development of the campus. The second one (B) will aim at putting into action this knowledge and aim at re-imagining a possible future development of the campus. This will be done not sequentially (one after the other), but in parallel, in order to cross-feed each other's work. The research projects so far considered are listed below:

A.1 Analyses of the cost of housing in Windhoek West. Researcher: Honours student from Land Administration. Supervisor: C.T.H. Bayer.

A.2 Perceptions of Windhoek West residents on the impact of the NUST-driven transformation. Researcher: Honours student from Land Administration. Supervisor: C.T.H. Bayer.

A.3 Analyses of the rental market in Windhoek West. Researcher: Honours student from Land Administration. Supervisor: C.T.H. Bayer.

A.4 Degree of adherence to building permits in Windhoek West. Researcher: Honours student from Land Administration. Supervisor: C.T.H. Bayer.

A.5 Income profile for the residents of Windhoek West. Researcher: Honours student from Land Administration. Supervisor: C.T.H. Bayer.

A.6 Social and economic profile of Windhoek West residents. Researcher: Honours student from Land Administration. Supervisor: C.T.H. Bayer.

A.7 Zonation and land use profile of Windhoek West. Researcher: Honours student from Land Administration. Supervisor: C.T.H. Bayer.

B1. Urban design aspects of Windhoek West, and its possible future transformation in relation to the NUST campus development. Researchers: Architecture 4th Year Students. Supervisor: Prof. S. Umenne (t.b.c.), Urban Design course.

B2. Socio-spatial development of the NUST campus and Windhoek West. Researchers: Architecture 4th Year Students. Supervisor: M. Marealle (t.b.c.), African Urbanisation in Global Perspective course.

B3. Town planning aspects of Windhoek West, and its possible future transformation in relation to the NUST campus development. Researcher: Town Planning Bachelor Honours students. Supervisors: R. Riethmueller, P. Genis (t.b.c.).

Public outreach

Research will be also closely knit with public outreach activities aimed at establishing and strengthening the relationships with inhabitants in the vicinity of the campus.

Participatory action research with local inhabitants

Innovative community activities organised in collaboration with local inhabitants in order to understand the current social dynamics in the neighbourhood, the grassroots' views and hopes of a future development, and exploring how these can become part of this development.

Organising party: ILMI and NASA

Focus groups with students, staff and faculty.

Collective sessions to understand the perspectives of students, staff and faculty with regards to the current development of the campus. It is proposed that one session is dedicated to those living within the vicinity of campus, and another one open to the larger university community.

Organising party: ILMI and NASA

Other public activities

The new DASP building

Lecture on the design process of the new signature building from NUST.

Speakers: Kerry McNamara Architects

Organising party: NASA

The NUST masterplan

Lecture on the design process and considerations with regards to the NUST masterplan.

Speakers: Barnard Mutua Architects

Organising party: NASA

Timeline

The project is proposed to be developed throughout 2016. Activities are envisioned as taking place in ensemble.

Detailed timeline to be added.

Colophon

The coordinating partner of this project is the Integrated Land Management Institute (ILMI).

ILMI is a centre of the Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences (FNRSS) at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) committed to develop reputable and multidisciplinary research and public outreach activities in the field of land, administration, property, architecture and spatial planning.

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