

Dickhaut, W., Giannousopoulou, M., Fettback, T., Nepravishta, F., Veleshnja, J., Stefani, I., Dedvukaj, R. (Eds.)

Resource Efficient Urban Regeneration of Residential Areas: Comparing Formal and Informal Development

Hamburg and Tirana Narratives



IMPRINT

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Concept: Adapted from Cairo's Urban Transformation, Mohandeseen and Zamalek Narratives (2018) developed by Gionatan Vignola, Maya Donelson & Xhelona Haveriku

Print: Berliner Buchdruck, Berlin, Germany
FLASH Publishing, Tirana, Albania

ISBN: 978-3-947972-37-1

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Hamburg and Tirana Narratives

Introduction

This publication offers a first glimpse of two different housing solutions in Tirana and Hamburg, built under different cultural, geographic, socio-economic and path dependent conditions, through the visual and oral narratives of residents, workers and visitors. These narratives reflect upon the historical development of each housing solution, highlight considerations and/or neglect for resource efficient planning, pinpoint current challenges and opportunities and discuss opportunities for participation as well as the efficiency of implemented measures. The photos and interviews featured show two characteristically different urban realities which were planned, designed and built at the second half of the 20th century and until the early beginning of the 21st century.

The first housing solution, as presented in this publication, investigates the informal settlements along Lana River in the western part of the city of Tirana, Albania. A form of housing solution that sprang in post-communist Albania as a response to rapid urbanization caused mainly by internal migration and led to conspicuous and unprecedented demand for housing in Tirana. In almost 30 years, Tirana quadrupled the number of residents and faced an imposing urban sprawl. This demographic phenomenon caused a boom in the construction sector that the newly established post-communist government found difficult to control. After 1990, with the changing of the political regime, a private sector emerged and decentralization of state responsibilities was initiated. The lack of governance capability and lack of knowledge about “private ownership rights” that followed the fall of the communist regime created the condition for the population to find a solution for housing based on self-arrangement, giving birth to different typologies of buildings and informal settlements. The main typologies of these settlements in Albania and Tirana could be distinguished as follows: a. illegal occupation of public or private land and construction of settlement without permit, b. extension of existing buildings without a permit, c. construction with permit with regular land transaction but infringement of permit, d. construction on own land but without permit. In 2004 and in order to address the various problems caused by the informal settlements the Albanian state responded by generating a comprehensive spatial plan for Tirana and by initiating an official legalization process. The informal settlements in Tirana including the investigation area along Lana River are an example of the relation between anthropic phenomena - such as the demographic phenomenon of migration and political, cultural, economic and social transformations- and the transformation of the built urban environment.

The Large Housing Estate (LHE) of Steilshoop is the second housing solution that this publication investigates. It is a quarter in the north-east of Hamburg. It was built in the 70s in the city's outskirts as a response to

discussions among planners and architects related to “urbanity” that have already began in the 60s. As a conclusion of these discussions the new founded concept was “urbanity through density”. The LHE in Steilshoop was built as a social housing estate, in which occupancy restrictions based on income as well as rent control was applied. Already during the first 10 years of the quarter’s life and despite the high standards for housing, the wide range of recreational areas around the estate and the innovative community participation initiatives, that ranged from lower participation involvement (informing citizens) to higher participation involvement (total power and control to dwellers to redefine and adapt how they live in the estates i.e. Block 6 in LHE in Steilshoop), the quarter faced and still faces social-problems and is viewed with skepticism and negativism. The decline of the LHEs in Hamburg, as happens in Steilshoop, is partly due to the concentration of lower-income, vulnerable and marginalized groups of people complemented with cuts in public expenditure and liberalization and also partly due to the structure (monolithic structure and appearance, prefabricated buildings) and quality of the buildings themselves and nowadays lack of infrastructure facilities.

The visual and oral narratives invite the reader to view these two different housing solutions from the perspectives of the people who live in and/or frequent these urban sites themselves. They showcase the different challenges inherent within each urban reality, but also hint at opportunities for their sustainable development.

Steilshoop: Although the initial strategies implemented in the LHE caused significant social and economic challenges, the current residents don’t consider this neighborhood to be a failed project, and rather they acknowledge the reasonable low cost for housing. This is also due to interventions, which increased the livability of the neighborhood and focused on improved social interaction and inclusion. Nevertheless, a high demand for improved connectivity of the neighborhood to the town center, improved recreational facilities for the youth and increased diversity of shopping possibilities and services in the neighborhood were observed during this study.

Lana River Settlement: Pollution caused by solid waste dumped in the environment and untreated wastewater discharged to the Lana River leads to nuisance, risks human and environmental health, and decreases livability. In addition, lack of public open spaces significantly reduces the interaction of residents, who traditionally highly value a good community. Infrastructure as roads and electricity supply require an upgrade, as roads are partially unpaved and over-head hanging electricity lines are a potential hazard and visual destruction. Nevertheless, residents made this area their home, and fear to lose their informally constructed houses. The informal settlement need to be refurbished to be able to offer all the areas and services needed for the standards of a livable neighborhood, taking advantage of the resources found on the site.

Hyrje

Ky botim ofron një vështrim të shpejtë të dy zgjidhjeve të ndryshme të strehimit, në Tiranë dhe Hamburg, të ndërtaura në kushte të ndryshme kulturore, gjeografike, social-ekonomike dhe kushteve të ndryshme historike në rrjedhën e kohës, të rrëfyera përmes imazheve dhe fjalës së kalimtarëve, banorëve, punëtorëve dhe vizitorëve. Këto tregime reflektojnë mbi zhvillimin historik të secilës prej zgjidhjeve të strehimit, theksojnë konsideratat dhe/ose neglizhencën për planifikimin strategjik të burimeve të ndryshme, identifikojnë sfidat dhe mundësitë aktuale dhe hapin diskutimin mbi mundësinë për pjesëmarrje në vendimmarrje si dhe efikasitetin e masave të zbatuara. Fotot dhe intervistat e paraqitura tregojnë ndryshmet karakteristike të dy realiteteve urbane, të cilat janë planifikuar, projektuar dhe ndërtaur në gjysmën e dytë të shekullit të 20-të dhe deri në fillim të shekullit të 21-të.

Zgjidhja e parë e strehimit, siç paraqitet në këtë botim, hulumton vendbanimet informale përgjatë lumit Lana në pjesën perëndimore të qytetit të Tiranës, në Shqipëri. Kjo zgjidhje strehimi lindi në Shqipërinë post-komuniste si përgjigje e urbanizimit të shpejtë të shkaktuar kryesisht nga migrimi i brendshëm, duke çuar në një kërkesë të paprecedentë për banesa në Tiranë. Në pothuajse 30 vjet, Tirana katërfishoi numrin e banorëve dhe u përball me një shtrirje urbane të gjerë dhe imponuese. Ky fenomen demografik shkaktoi një bum në sektorin e ndërtimit, të cilin, qeveria e sapokrijuar postkomuniste, e kishte të vështirë ta kontrollonte. Pas vitit 1990, me ndryshimin e regjimit politik, u zhvillua sektori privat dhe filloi decentralizimi i përgjegjësive të aparatit shtetëror. Mungesa e aftësisë qeverisëse dhe mungesa e njohurive mbi 'të drejtat e pronës private', të cilat pasuan rënien e regjimit komunist, krijuan kushtet të tilla ku popullsia mund të gjente një zgjidhje për strehimin me vetërregullim, duke u dhënë kështu jetë tipologjive të ndryshme të ndërtesave dhe vendbanimeve informale. Tipologjitë kryesore të këtyre vendbanimeve në Tiranë, apo dhe gjithë Shqipërinë, mund të ndahen si vijon: a. zaptimi i paligjshëm i tokës publike ose private dhe ndërtimi i vendbanimit pa leje; b. Zgjerimi/shtimi i objekteve ekzistuese pa leje; c. ndërtim me leje në truall me çertifikatë pronësie, por duke mos ndjekur lejen e marrë; d. ndërtim pa leje në truall me çertifikatë pronësie. Në vitin 2004, për të adresuar problemet e ndryshme të shkaktuara nga vendbanimet informale, shteti Shqiptar u përgjigj duke krijuar një Plan zhvillimi hapësinor për gjithë territorin e Tiranës dhe filloi zyrtarisht procesin e legalizimit. Vendbanimet informale në Tiranë, duke përfshirë zonën e studimit përgjatë lumit të Lanës, janë një shembull i lidhjes midis dukurive antropike - si fenomeni demografik i migrimit dhe transformimeve politike, kulturore, ekonomike dhe sociale - dhe transformimit të mjedisit të ndërtaur urban.

Large Housing Estate (LHE) në Steilshoop është zgjidhja e dytë e strehimit që është marrë në studim nga ky botim, e cila është një lagje në verilindje të Hamburgut. Ajo u ndërtaur në vitet '70 në periferi të qytetit, si përgjigje ndaj

diskutimeve midis planifikuesve dhe arkitektëve lidhur me “urbanizimin” që kishte filluar në vitet ‘60. Në përfundim të këtyre diskutimeve u themelua koncepti i ri i “urbanizimit përmes densitetit”. Large Housing Estate (LHE) në Steilshoop u ndërtua si një zonë banimi sociale, në të cilën u zbatuan kushtet e strehimit bazuar në të ardhurat individuale si dhe kontrolli i vlerave të qirasë. Menjëherë gjatë 10 viteve të para të jetës së lagjes, pavarësisht standardeve të larta të banesave kolektive, gamës së gjerë të zonave rekreative përreth pronës dhe iniciativave inovative të pjesëmarrjes së komunitetit, të cilat varionin nga përfshirja më e ulët (informimi i qytetarëve) deri te përfshirja më e lartë e pjesëmarrjes (fuqi e plotë dhe kontroll i banorëve për të ripërcaktuar dhe përshtatur mënyrën se si ata jetojnë në ndërtesën në pronësi, si rasti i Bllokut 6 në LHE në Steilshoop), lagja u përbal me ende përballet me probleme sociale dhe shihet me skepticism dhe negativizëm. Degradimi i LHE-ve në Hamburg, siç vërehet në Steilshoop, ka ndodhur pjesërisht për shkak të përqendrimin të grupeve të njerëzve me të ardhura të ulëta, vulnerabël dhe të marginalizuar, krahas reduktimeve në shpenzimet publike dhe liberalizim, sikurse dhe pjesërisht për shkak të strukturës së ndërtesave (struktura dhe pamja monolitike, ndërtesa të parafabrikuara), cilësisë së ndërtesave dhe në ditët e sotme mungesës së objekteve dhe shërbimeve infrastrukturore.

Shpjegimet vizuale dhe të rrëfyera e ftojnë lexuesin t’i shohë këto dy zgjidhje të ndryshme strehimi nga këndvështrimi i njerëzve të cilët i jetojnë dhe/ose frekuentojnë këto zona urbane. Ato shfaqin sfidat e ndryshme të secilit realiteti urban, por gjithashtu, sugjerojnë mundësitë për zhvillimin e tyre të qëndrueshëm.

Steilshoop: Megjithëse strategjitë fillestare të zbatuara në LHE sollën sfida të rëndësishme sociale dhe ekonomike, banorët aktualë nuk e shohin këtë lagje të dështuar dhe për më tepër e shohin strehimin e ofruar për kosto të ulëta, të arsyeshëm. Kjo vjen edhe për shkak të ndërhyrjeve, të cilat rritën jetueshmërinë e lagjes dhe u fokusuan në përmirësimin e ndërveprimit social dhe përfshirjes në vendimmarrje. Megjithatë, gjatë këtij studimi u vu re një kërkesë e lartë për përmirësimin e lidhjes së lagjes me qendrën e qytetit, me transport publik, përmirësimin e mjediseve argëtuese për të rinjtë dhe rritjen e mundësive të aktiviteteve komerciale dhe shërbimeve në lagje.

Vendbanimi përgjatë lumit Lana: Ndotja e shkaktuar nga mbetjet e ngurta të hedhura në mjedis dhe ujërat e zeza të patrajtuara që derdhen në lumin Lana u japin jetë shumë problematikave, rrezikohet shëndeti i njerëzve dhe mjedisi, sikurse dhe çënohet mundësia e jetueshmërisë në këto zona. Gjithashtu, mungesa e hapësirave të hapura publike redukton ndjeshëm ndërveprimin e banorëve, të cilët tradicionalisht e vlerësojnë shumë një komunitet të mirë. Megjithatë, banorët e kanë kthyer këtë zonë në shtëpinë e tyre dhe kanë frikë të humbasin banesat e tyre të ndërtuara abuzivisht. Zonat informale nevojisin një ristrukturim urban që të mundësojë në vijim hapësirat dhe shërbimet e nevojshme për të qenë një lagje e jetueshme sipas standardeve bashkëkohore, duke u bazuar patjetër te burimet e ndryshme që ofron mjedisi përreth.



Source: openstreetmap.org (25.10.2021). Steilshoop, Hamburg, Germany. 53.611045, 10.058843

Steilshoop District

Hamburg, Germany



- Interviews
- Pictures
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Hamburg Narratives

Residents, visitors and workers were interviewed about the historical development and resource efficient planning of Steilshoop and its current challenges and opportunities. The interviews serve as inspiration for their corresponding photographic narratives.



“ We need younger crowd; Students and apprentices could add life to Steilshoop”

Martin Leupelt

26

Worker

Erisch-Ziegel-Ring

See p. 12 - 15

Mr. Leupelt is a young man who moved to Hamburg from the state of Bavaria for his studies. As a part time employee, he joined an office in Steilshoop in the HR department about 5 months ago.

He believes that the public transport is inefficient and therefore, he prefers to walk 30 minutes to his work place. On the question of how the neighborhood appears to him at first glance, he thinks that it is rather substandard. The major reason for this, he believes, is the lack of a well organized sub centre that provides options for the comparatively low-earning residents. The existing shopping centre lacks variety and affordability in his opinion.

Additionally, Mr. Leupelt lamented about the lack of sufficient street lights, due to which, at times he avoids taking certain

routes on his way back home. On being informed about the new underground metro line (U5) project, he seemed delighted and viewed this as a huge step towards better infrastructure.

Mr. Leupelt also emphasized that the average age of population in Steilshoop is 40 years and above, which is a cause of great concern, since students and apprentices add diversity and potential life to any neighbourhood.

With his concluding remarks as quoted above, Mr. Leupelt also left us with some innovative suggestions with regards to synergy between renewable energy and community. He recommended using the large roof areas available in each building as a combination of PV generation and as green roofs. This he believes would also bring the communities together.



Fatima Zebari

36

Unemployed/ Looking for work
Gründgensstraße

See p. 16 - 19

Unlike physical infrastructure, intangible elements like community relations and a healthy atmosphere cannot be drawn on paper. At the same time, they hold critical value for a neighborhood to thrive. This very fact was reinforced when we talked to Fatima Zebari, a 36 year old tourist, visiting a friend in Steilshoop and looking for possible employment. About the outlook of the neighborhood infrastructure and development, she felt that the neighborhood is quite sufficient and progressive especially in terms of walkability, street lighting, green spaces, cuisine options, free floating e-mobility and bike sharing options.

As an immigrant, she is of the view that the greatest opportunity in the neighborhood lies in the well-knit community structure. When asked about

“Community interaction is lacking, even if they are next door neighbors.”

the energy situation, she replied that most of the appliances used at her guest's place (in Steilshoop) are run on electricity and similar to her home in Dresden, the price of electricity here is also increasing beyond means. Following this thought, she felt open to the idea of using solar panels for domestic use, especially if there are incentives and relaxations provided by the government.

Miss Zebari highlighted that the neighborhood is predominantly occupied by immigrants and there is a lack of interaction between them and the local people. If this aspect is improved somehow, the feeling of this neighborhood being considered as a 'ghetto' would fade away, she concluded.



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Fehlingleiche











“The waiting lists are long.”

Brigitte Wecklein
40 years old
Housewife
Fehlinghöhe street

See p. 22 - 25

Brigitte is a housewife and takes care of her children. She has been living in Steilshoop in one of those high-rise buildings for 40 years. Since then, her landlord has not renovated her flat even once. Only the bathroom was renewed, but nothing else. The facade and the heating system are still the same. The bills for electricity, heating and rent have only kept increasing for the past years. Power outages are very rare.

In terms of brightness her flat is rather dark. She also assumes that very little renewable energy is used here. With regard to the development of Steilshoop, she sees little prospects. Brigitte said, the area is missing everything.

Personally, she thinks Steilshoop needs a new shopping center, more doctors and more apartments. Apartments in the new building project on the outskirts of the settlement are hard to get. The waiting lists are long. She is sure that each of the new apartments are taken by now. Those who have always lived in Steilshoop will not get the new apartments, they will be given to people from outside the settlement.



Alexander Frank
47 years old
Resident
Scheyerring street

See p. 26 - 29

Alexander has been living in Steilshoop for 20 years. His apartment is higher up, bright, not built in and south-facing. During summer he can ventilate his apartment by opening the windows.

With regards to improving Steilshoop the list is so long, he said. Energy related decisions are mainly taken by the landlords. For instance choosing an energy provider. Thus his last landlord announced heat-insulating and energetic measures and planned to declare it as modernization. To declare such measurements as modernization, it would mean the landlord could pass a certain percentage of the costs on to the residents. If it would be declared a renovation the landlord would have to bear all costs.

“Energy related decisions are mainly taken by the landlords”

If you know the neighborhood then you know that the income level is very low, he claims. Most of those residents who resisted the increased rents failed in court.

In terms of the future he thinks that the investments into the educational institutions are great. He is also looking forward to the new train station to improve the connectivity of Steilshoop.



















“You get to know and learn about different cultures here”

Mandy

33

Saleswoman
Schreyerring

See p. 32 - 35

Mandy, a mother of three children, moved from Bremen to Steilshoop 9 years ago. She used to work in the shopping center here but is currently on maternity leave. Mandy and her family are generally very happy to live in Steilshoop. All children go to the school in the neighborhood. She appreciates that the basic needs are covered as there is a supermarket, pharmacy and a kindergarten in the area. Moreover, she perceives the area as very clean and family-friendly.

She appreciates that the neighborhood is very diverse since people get to know and learn about different cultures. Inhabitants greet each other on the streets and sometimes they have a chat. She perceives the development over the past years as very positive as many

houses were renovated and facades were renewed. Although she is very happy in Steilshoop, there are still some aspects that could be improved.

The main issue that needs to be addressed is still the shopping center in her opinion. She explains that it is visually unpleasant and in bad condition. As the owner of the center changed and the U5 will connect Steilshoop in the future, she hopes to see positive developments in this relation. Furthermore, apartments in Steilshoop are cheap but also rather small. It is very difficult to find bigger apartments that are suitable for bigger families.



Cynthia Owusuaa
52
Telekom Employee
Fehlinghöhe

See p. 36 - 39

Cynthia, who has been living in Steilshoop for 25 years, perceives the neighborhood as very peaceful and family-friendly. Most of the inhabitants are families with one or more children. However, children leave the district after school as university is rather far away. In the past, mostly Germans lived in Steilshoop, today the majority consists of foreigners and most Germans have moved away.

There has been a lot of positive development over the past years as buildings were renovated, facades were renewed and the infrastructure and roads were improved as well. Steilshoop is becoming more and more popular and many people can actually afford to live here. The public transportation covered

“What is here now is much better than in the past”

by bus is good and connectivity will become even better in the future as the neighbourhood will be connected to the U5. Furthermore, there is great neighborly solidarity in the area.

Cynthia explains that she perceives the shopping center as the only major issue in Steilshoop. It is monotonous, lifeless, unattractive and the rents for shops in the center are too expensive. In the past, non-residents used to visit the center but today people go to other places to shop that are more attractive. She would like to see more different supermarkets and the renovation of the shopping center in the future.













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“The best investment anyone could make in this neighborhood would be to support the children”

Bilga and Tinucci

44,44

Teacher and Electrician
Gropiusring

See p. 42 - 45

I have been living here for over 20 years and Steilshoop has not changed much at all. The infrastructure is the same as in the 90s and only a few houses have been renovated. One thing is that more and more of my neighbors are immigrants who do not speak German. This language barrier is not really a problem but it sometimes creates a strange, cold atmosphere here for me. When I came to Hamburg in 1995, I was not aiming to live in this neighborhood or anything, I more-so chose my apartment because it was extremely affordable for me, had enough space and a nice layout. Having the school within walking distance for my children was also an advantage. In my experience, the neighborhood is

generally safe but I don't have any friends in Steilshoop, and as you can see, there are very few public spaces available here. Most often, Timucci and I travel with our car to other parts of Hamburg to meet our friends, dine, shop, and have leisure time. Many things could be better in Steilshoop, but the best investment anyone could make in this neighborhood would be to support the children and give them something to do here. I would love to see an arcade or a small theater be added to the shopping center. Something like this would entertain the kids, give them somewhere cool to meet together, and maybe keep them out of trouble.



Mohammed
16
Student
Fritz-Flinte-Ring

See p. 46 - 49

*“It isn’t so safe here
after dark”*

Right now, I’m a student at that school around the corner and I live here with my parents and three siblings. Our family came here 7 years ago to escape the dangerous war situation in Kurdistan, our original home. The neighborhood has not changed much in that time -- a few stores have come in and gone out of business but not much else. I don’t remember my parent’s process for apartment hunting, but this area probably seemed stable, quiet, and affordable to them. I have many friends in the neighborhood. In fact, almost all the kids at school live here in these buildings. In my free time, I often meet up with friends in the courtyard behind my building -- we chill and talk until dark when we have to move inside.

It is not so safe here after dark -- there are many instances of people getting robbed or even stabbed here. I think it is because there are too many people living here in this small area -- 19,000 of us right on top of each other. If I could change something about Steilshoop, I would make it safer at night and improve the shopping center. My family can purchase everything we need there, but none of the businesses are fun or exciting. I guess my friends and I could go to the city center to shop and hang out, but we never do -- that’s for tourists.





← Einbahnstraße

Einbahnstraße













“The children and teenagers in the area have nothing to do.”

Sinah Hollingworth
31
Bistro
Gropiusring

See p. 52 - 55

Sinah doesn't live in Steilshoop, but she's there five days a week. She says there are many issues in the neighborhood, and notes that many can be seen, just by looking around. However, one example that stands out to her is the lack of traffic to her Bistro due to its location. Additionally, she notes that children and teenagers in the area have nothing to do and make trouble for some of the residents and workers. She hopes some of that will change with some projects like the nearby park. In contrast to other interviewees, Sinah thinks that the biking infrastructure is lacking bike lanes, and criticizes that the placement of the public transportation stops concentrated near the shopping center, saying that those that live and work further north in the area don't have good access to this

system. For those that drive, Sinah says, the conditions are a “catastrophe” because of the thoroughly parked road network. Although the district has its problems, she also sees lots of positives in Steilshoop. Sinah says that there has been a lot of internal social and city work in the area, and mentions that the Alraune GmbH has played a large role in promoting the community with projects large and small. Despite its issues, both social and otherwise, Sinah likes the area, and is hopeful for its future



Mr. Rühmland
83
Retired
Schreyerring

See p. 56 - 59

Mr. Rühmland likes Steilshoop, and has lived in the area for over 40 years, and has watched his neighborhood grow and change in both negative and positive ways during his residence there. He mentions firsthand that he liked the area, and is generally pleased with it as a whole. Despite his liking for the neighborhood, however, he worries about the problems that occur around the shopping center, Einkaufszentrum Steilshoop. He does most of his shopping here and has noticed deterioration of its condition in recent years. He mentions not only the physical structure of the property itself, but also that he is rather concerned with the social changes in the area as well. Mr. Rühmland is disappointed in this part of the neighborhood, and says it's

*“The U-Bahn will
come in fifty years...
I hope I'll still be
around.”*

very much neglected. Additionally, some property has been damaged in the past. On a lighter note, he finds the biking infrastructure in Steilshoop relatively good, and mostly gets around on his bicycle or on foot. He does use public transportation when needed, mostly the bus, and notes that he is content with the connectivity in the area. Mr Rühmland mentions that he would love to see an U-Bahn line in the neighborhood, but jokes that it would take fifty years to be built, but he hopes he'd still be around to see it.









Logo of the University of Applied Sciences (HAW) and the text "HAW am See".



Que
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tique
6750









“Senior-oriented development is Necessitate”

Onur
22
Student
Erich-Ziegel-Ring

See p. 62 - 65

Onur calls Steilshoop his home and finds it calm and relaxing even though occasionally there are misunderstandings between people. He finds it especially good for young people because there are places to play football or sports. In general, he thinks it is completely okay for young people to live here but older people have more complaints about Steilshoop.

He points to the lack of commercial areas, and that they can only find supermarkets in the area. He states that many shops are already leaving the neighborhood, that's why sometimes they need to go to other neighborhoods to get groceries.

He finds the overall connection of the neighborhood satisfactory and notes that

it takes around 20-30 minutes to go to the main station so he cannot complain at all. When asked about what he would like to change in the neighborhood, his answer is the shopping mall.

He finds it dirty, unorganized, and a source of bad image for Steilshoop. He also thinks that older people cannot go out of the neighborhood very often, so they spend more time in the shopping mall than young people but he says that he does not find it healthy.



Alex
17
Student
Gropiusring

See p. 66 - 69

“Bad Reputation of Steilshoop does not convey the truth”

Alex has been living in Steilshoop already for six years and sees the neighborhood as a combination of various cultures and people. He states that the neighborhood has a bad reputation but that does not convey the truth.

He acknowledges that there was news about criminal activities in Steilshoop but it was years ago, the neighborhood has changed ever since.

He finds it understandable that people ask for a subway station, but he does not have difficulties reaching places he needs to go, such as his university.

He would like to have more parks in the neighborhood, especially for his dog (Jim). Also, he thinks that there aren't enough spaces for young people. He

mentions the plans to build activity centers for young people which were never realized in the end.









Kulturstadt

Akademie der Natur

GLÜCKSWISSEN

JULIA ENGEN

30.05.

121 FANTASIE (Chamber for Traveler)

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Die die...

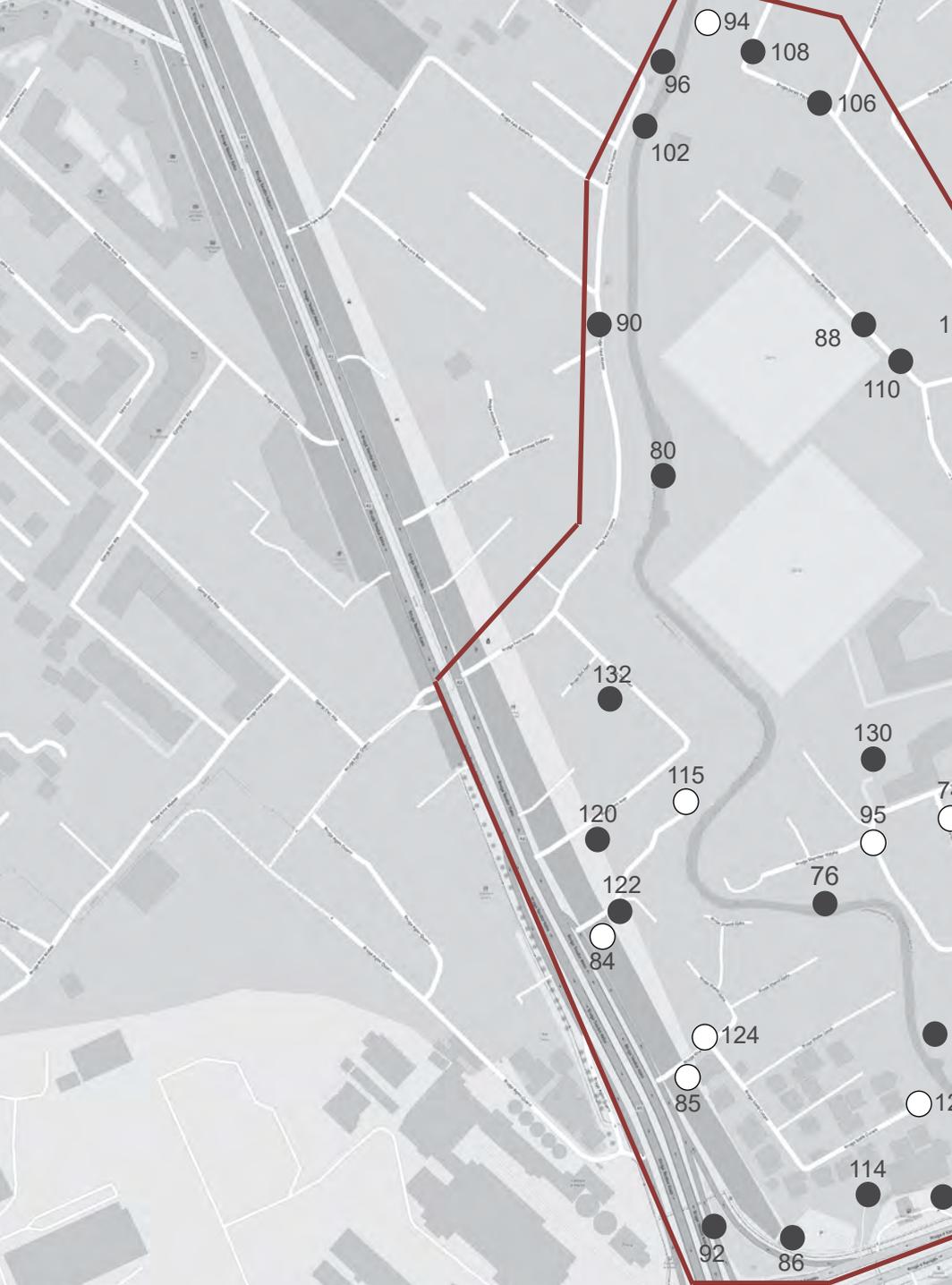








← Fahrradstellplätze Besucher



Source: openstreetmap.org (25.10.2021). Tirana, Albania
41.323930, 19.790821

Informal Settlement near Lana River

Tirana, Albania



- Interviews
- Pictures
- 00 Page number





Tirana Narratives

Residents, visitors and workers from the Informal Settlement near Lana River in Tirana were also interviewed about the historical development and its current challenges and opportunities. Once again, the interviews serve as inspiration for their corresponding photographic narratives.



“This is the first time I have been asked about an opinion on my neighbourhood.”

Gentian Doko

27

Auto-electrician

Rruga Skënder Shtylla

See p. 76 - 79

The prospects of finding someone on the day of our visit seemed as grey as the sky above our heads. This was not due to the bleak weather but rather owing to the vastly popular negative image of the authorities. After being denied an interview from numerous people, Mr Dako, an auto-electrician working and living in the area for 7 years agreed to share his opinions. Even though the sun was still hiding behind the clouds but for us the day was brightened because of this opportunity.

When asked about the energy situation he replied that the web of electric cables hanging overhead are not only a safety concern but also impede his business as large vehicles cannot come to his shop for repairs. Although, he was generally satisfied with other matters related to

consumption including the reliability of power, cost of electricity, theft control by authorities, connection procedures and street lighting, he felt that the government could do more, especially in modernizing the electricity supply and providing incentives for renewable energies.

Mr Doko made it clear that while the supply of clean drinking water is a cause of great concern, the Lana River only brings them the negative consequences of foul smell, waste, disease and insects. With his concluding remarks quoted above, Mr Doko left us, taking with him the ray of light that had appeared a while ago.



Manushaqe Hoxha
67
Seller
Rruga Kel Kodheli

See p. 80 - 83

For the past 30 years, the neighborhood has undergone what Mrs. Hoxha describes as an irregular transformation. The web-like wires in the skies and ill-managed sewage have been the key challenges of the neighborhood, she recounted. On what residents could do to solve some of these challenges, she felt that those matters would be best solved with proper government reforms. Although water and energy are not the main concern for the neighborhood, there are a few short power outages and most of the available water is not potable and would need further filtration. For heating and cooling, the individuals bear the responsibility as there is no existing centralized city grid. When quizzed about resource efficient renovations and constructions, and

“As long as we pay less, source of energy doesn’t matter; renewable or not”

renewable energy resources, she only managed to mention solar panels as the only insight she had about the latter. Again, access to electricity meters, according to her, is easy and electricity bills were affordable, with a household of 4, paying averagely an amount equivalent to 50 Euros per month. Economic benefits, rather than environmental reasons were the motivating factor to switch to the use of renewable resources emphasizing on provision of incentive. Commuting to basic necessity places like markets and bus stops are also available within walkable distances with good street-lighting system. Finally, she revealed that no NGO has contacted the neighborhood on renewables, although she was reluctant to share her opinion on the current mode of governance.



















“ After the demolition of my house, I am losing faith. ”

Abdullah Terziu
74 years old
Retiree
Ilmi Aver street

See p. 86 - 89

Abdullah worked here for 46 years and has lived here for 20 years. In 1975 there was a flour factory and the whole area was used as a farm and until 1990 there were no houses. The Greenhouse was operational until then. After the 90s, the construction of houses in the neighborhood began. Electricity was distributed from the base cabinet “Tregu Elektrik” toward the main cabinet of the neighborhood. From there they laid the power lines themselves to their homes, which increased with new settlers to meet the energy demand. There have been endless interruptions in the grid but it has stabilized since the 2000s. Electricity bills have only increased over the years. Until 2009, the state had no control over the distribution and payments. Water was provided and heating was done by

boilers with electricity. The constructions are irregular, and often have functional problems with a lack of urbanism. Air-Conditioning is used during the summer, while chimneys, and wood stoves are added during the winter. He lost his house, due to construction of a new road through the neighborhood. However, there is still hope that this area is going to develop, but considering what has happened to him after the demolition of his house, he is losing faith. Today the area attracts young families for better living conditions in Tirana.



Shkëlzen Doda
45 years old
Butcher
Stef Curani street

See p. 90 - 93

“ Things have descended into a chaotic state.”

Shkëlzen has been living in this neighborhood for 15 years and started his own business here 10 years ago. This area has always been undeveloped. Since construction started in the neighborhood, things have descended into a chaotic state. Those responsible for the urban plan have neglected common spaces leading to lack of green spaces and infrastructure problems. There are unfinished homes because people have emigrated to earn money and then return. In order to get electricity in their homes they had to make their own interventions. The source of energy is in the northeast of Tirana and from there it is distributed to fixed cabins in each neighborhood. They used to experience power outages but not anymore as they are stabilized. Energy bills have only

increased over the years. Solar panels power about 15% of dwellings in the area. During the summer and winter, they use air conditioning but around 10 years ago they also used wood stoves in the winter. The area attracts young families, seeking better education for their family. Most buildings are two floor residential, with businesses such as technology services, restaurants and cafes on their ground floor. The neighborhood also contains private houses. Roads are incomplete and lack lighting, making them inaccessible and causing people to feel unsafe at night.















Vellezi GJANA

ABU BAKR SEYDI

MARKET A





“I left my home to start better here but I regret it.”

Ramazan Gjonaj / Denisa Gjonaj
54 and 11
Street grocery seller / Student
Ibrahim Rugova Street

See p. 96 - 99

Ramazan is 54 years old from Krastë town who moved to Tirana in the hope of better opportunities and has been living there for 35 years now. He was among the first to build his house (informally) near the Lana River. His daughter Denisa was born here and is currently studying.

“I have nowhere to play with my friends, I play at home by myself and this bothers me a lot” - said Denisa. In addition to the lack of space to play, she pointed out how long she has to walk to get to the school, as there are no educational buildings nearby.

“There were lush green fields here, there was a lot of space, and it used to remind me of the village I came from,” said Ramazan explaining the trouble they have nowadays because of waste and unbearable smell in the area. He admitted

that it was because of him and the other residents because it has now turned into a habit to throw garbage nearby since they do not know where else to dispose it, probably because of the non-availability of garbage bins.

He tried doing urban agriculture along with a bunch of farm animals but stopped after a while because of pollution and the danger of animals consuming waste products.

He has high hopes from the young generation that they would bring a positive change in their lives and the city.



Shefqet Dano

84

Retired electrician

Skënder Shtylla Street

See p. 100 - 103

Shefqet is one of the first inhabitants of his neighborhood, he moved there twenty years ago from Elbasan, his native city, looking for better living conditions. He says that during these years there have been many changes in the area. At the beginning there were only a few houses and the streets were in bad condition. Later on, more people came in and more houses were built. In the last ten years, bigger buildings have been constructed and there are improvements in streets such as lighting and sidewalks compared to their primitive condition some years ago.

In his opinion, a major problem is the polluted river. He mentions that the river's condition is caused by the inhabitants, as they are the ones who throw garbage in the river and he finds it sad that on

“Also the municipality is doing nothing to solve the problem.”

one side they are okay with it, and on the other side, that the municipality is doing nothing to solve it.

Shefqet describes the neighborhood as quiet, and says that there is no traffic and only few cars. But for him the third age doesn't have a lot of priorities. “I am 84 years old, and can't find public spaces for me and my friends of my age to spend time together. I see my friends rarely and it is sad for me because one day I can surprisingly find out that one of them may be dead.”



















“I would really prefer more public spaces, it feels like streets and cars have taken over.”

Armanda
26
Baker
Stavri Themeli

See p. 106 - 109

For Armanda it feels like nothing has changed at all even though she has been living in the area for almost a year. The neighborhood is very large and not friendly to explore so she has not really seen it for the most part. It has been a long year for her and the lack of community is not helping at all when it comes to living in the area. People seem cold and irritable to her.

“The development of the area is intense but I still find lack in being together as a community. There are no public spaces, it feels like the street network and a great amount of cars have taken over. I would like it if there were more green and free spaces instead of so many buildings.” The Lana River does not affect her life that much, except for times when the bad smell can be felt. This comes as

no surprise since the rivers presence is blocked by the back of numerous buildings.

“The basic needs are covered in the neighborhood. There is electricity, water supply and the trashcans are not very far.” Her family shares the same opinions about the area. Her son attends a kindergarten which is not far. She seems to be content with the quality of the institutions in the neighborhood. When asked if people prefer to use religious objects as places of gathering she has no information as she and her circle do not follow any practice.



Ardit Baxhija
29 years old
Call Center Agent
'Gaqo Avrazi' street

See p. 110 - 113

Ardit has been living in Tirana for 7 years. He moved in this neighborhood around 6 months ago because of his job. When asked about the neighborhood when he first came here, he states that nothing changed at all, it even got worse. Some negative aspects of living in this neighborhood for Ardit are the lack of road infrastructure, unpaved roads, lack of streetlights and litterbins. The bad condition of this infrastructure also indicates a high chance of vandalism. Ardit told us that thieves have entered his house two times!

Keeping in touch with your neighbors, has always been one of the most beautiful social interaction aspects of Tirana, and Albania generally. But for Ardit, it seems like this kind of connection

"I don't feel safe in this neighborhood, thieves attempted to enter my house two times!"

in this neighborhood is fading away. Since this place obviously lacks public spaces, he did not have the opportunity to meet and socialize with his neighbors. The streets are narrow, and you cannot easily find open spaces. The neighborhood lacks parking places, and the street gets overloaded with cars.

Discussing with Ardit and other inhabitants, we noticed that the community spirit is missing. Lana River does not have any social impact on this neighborhood, maybe because its presence is almost physically missing.



















“People are cycling more and now it is safer for children.”

Alma

49

Unemployed
Kavaja Street

See p. 116 - 119

Alma has been a resident of the Project Area for 28 years. Although there are some issues in her neighborhood, she says that the community is friendly and happy. Despite her satisfaction with the neighborhood, however, Alma mentioned that the area has been mismanaged during her time there. Although she provided a multitude of examples, two of her most notable examples were the poorly maintained roads and the open sewage canals. One solution of local officials was to propose a revitalization of the nearby Lana River, but most residents would have preferred a proposal for improving the road conditions in the area. Alma herself has had personal experience with the bad roads, and said that she has had difficulties getting her children to school because of them.

There is a bus stop near where Alma lives, but she chooses to drive to work instead. Despite primarily driving, Alma has noticed an increase in the number of cyclists in the area. She sees this as a positive change, and she believes this will lead to safer roads for her and others' children. There continues to be a lack of trust in public officials, and for this reason, the community has launched its own initiatives to solve problems locally. Although there is still work to be done, Alma maintains hope for a better future.



Blerta
28
Saleswoman
Ilmi Aver Street

See p. 120 - 123

Blerta is a young 28-year-old girl from Tirana, and even though she is not a resident of this neighborhood, she spends a large portion of her day within this neighborhood since her work office is located there. One of the biggest problems she faces is related to traffic, as she commutes to work using her bicycle, because the bus takes too long due to heavy traffic. Even for bicycles, it is not safe due to the many pot holes and no bicycle lanes. She believes it is not safe for young children to ride their bicycles, because you are sharing the road with other cars. She also complains about the commute time. Normally it takes her up to one hour to get to work, and her sister, who lives in Yzberisht takes two hours to commute. In her eyes, the area is not seen as a safe and suitable place

“ Problem is not the people, the problem is the government”

to live. Many of the residents complain about the new road widening projects which were designed to improve their livability are actually negatively affecting the inhabitants' homes. The construction interferes with the traffic which causes more delays and blocks access to the entrance of some homes. She says officials do not consider the local's complaints. “The problem is not the people, she says”, it is the government who is responsible for designing and implementing these strategies—questioning the usefulness of these projects as well as their intentions.



















*“I live in a village in
middle of a city”*

Arben Cela
60 Years
Factory Worker
Rruga Stef Curani

See p. 126 - 129

Arben moved to Tirana 25 years ago and has been living in the neighborhood since his migration from Berat. He hoped to provide a better lifestyle for his family. Currently, he works in Pirma Flour Factory, which has given him better opportunities compared to his work during communism.

When asked, he stated that the neighborhood has changed drastically over the years mainly due to unplanned developments and informal settlement. Living in proximity to Lana River seems to be a true challenge to him as they have to get used to polluted waters and strong odors, especially during summer. They have been waiting for authority to intervene and solve this problem for a long time now.

He prefers to walk or take buses to

move around the city although he is terribly dissatisfied with the bus services due to delays, lack of ventilation, and overcrowding during peak hours. He further states that unfortunately due to his age he might not always be capable of walking long distances. Since the pandemic, the number of buses available has been reduced making it difficult to reach the city center and making trips more time-consuming.

The infrastructure is in a very bad shape and to him, it feels like he has been living in a village in middle of a city.



Ana Selmani
48 Years
Unemployed
Kavaja Street

See p. 130 - 133

*“Street lights, for
comfort and safer feel
at night”*

Ana has lived in the neighborhood for almost 25 years since she and her family moved from north of Albania to Tirana in search of better opportunities. Her main motives for the migration to the city were to change the lifestyle, a greater access to the job market and the hope to ameliorate children's future.

There have been no significant changes in the neighborhood since her migration, no efforts were made to improve the quality of life and for the betterment of living situation. She expressed the desire to change, suggesting numerous basic needs; wishing for paved roads and trash bins near her house. She also feels threatened during the dark-hours thanks to absence of any street lights and many passers-by. In her opinion, the current situation is not comfortable and restricts

the movement after dark. She would really appreciate the change in public lighting infrastructure. When quizzed about the situation of Lana River, she urged not to dispose of any waste in Lana River as the smell is terrible and affects health of children.

She prefers walking instead of using bus or car since everything is easily accessible within a walking distance as she resides closer to Kavaja Street. When asked about her view on new road developments, we could see she was a bit hesitant because new roads could mean a possible risk for her home to be demolished.

















Trigger Exhibition

A trigger, is that which sets something off. In this case, the direction of the project. The Hamburg and Tirana Groups were asked to create an image that represented a 'Trigger' that conveyed the results and impressions of the presentation inputs, the interviews, group discussions and (virtual-) site analysis of the Informal Settlement near Lana River in Tirana and the LHE of Steilshoop in Hamburg. The images were voted on by the members of this workshop and the winning images are printed as front and back cover of this publication. All other images are presented on the following pages (134-137)



Amr Mobasher
Asad Tayyebi Fallah
Gabriela Lugones Guzman
Megi Duka
Nicole Tomczak
Renato Hamza
Sidorela Hoxha
Tarini Sharma
Tiziana Lohja



Abhishek Sharma, Dounia Chlyeh
Emmanuel Addai-Boakye Yiadom
Gledis Mehmeti, Jeel Mehta, Olta Merhadi
Rei Selimaj, Sher Khan, Suada Hasa



Aaron Wieland, Abhinandh Mathampattu,
Alba Golemi, Ceren Tezgider, Dije Loca, Erisa
Korita, Fatbardha Halilaj, Sadaf Eftekhari,
Walaa Aldammad

Breathing spaces?



Aferdita Malaj, Daniel Jakaj, Igli Shehi
Joana Qamo, Melina Kühenapfel,
Nouha Koubaa, Sakhil Chaudhary,
Sanjana Mahesh Adi, Shiplu Chanda Avi



Ahmed Adegbami, Christina Terova,
Era Xhelilaj, Florian Isufi, Greis Golemi,
Irimi Bregasi, Keegan Arnold, Kiana Sasani,
Larita Inthisonne



Abhishek Sharma, Dounia Chlyeh
Emmanuel Addai-Boakye Yiadom
Gledis Mehmeti, Jeel Mehta, Olta Merhadi
Rei Selimaj, Sher Khan, Suada Hasa



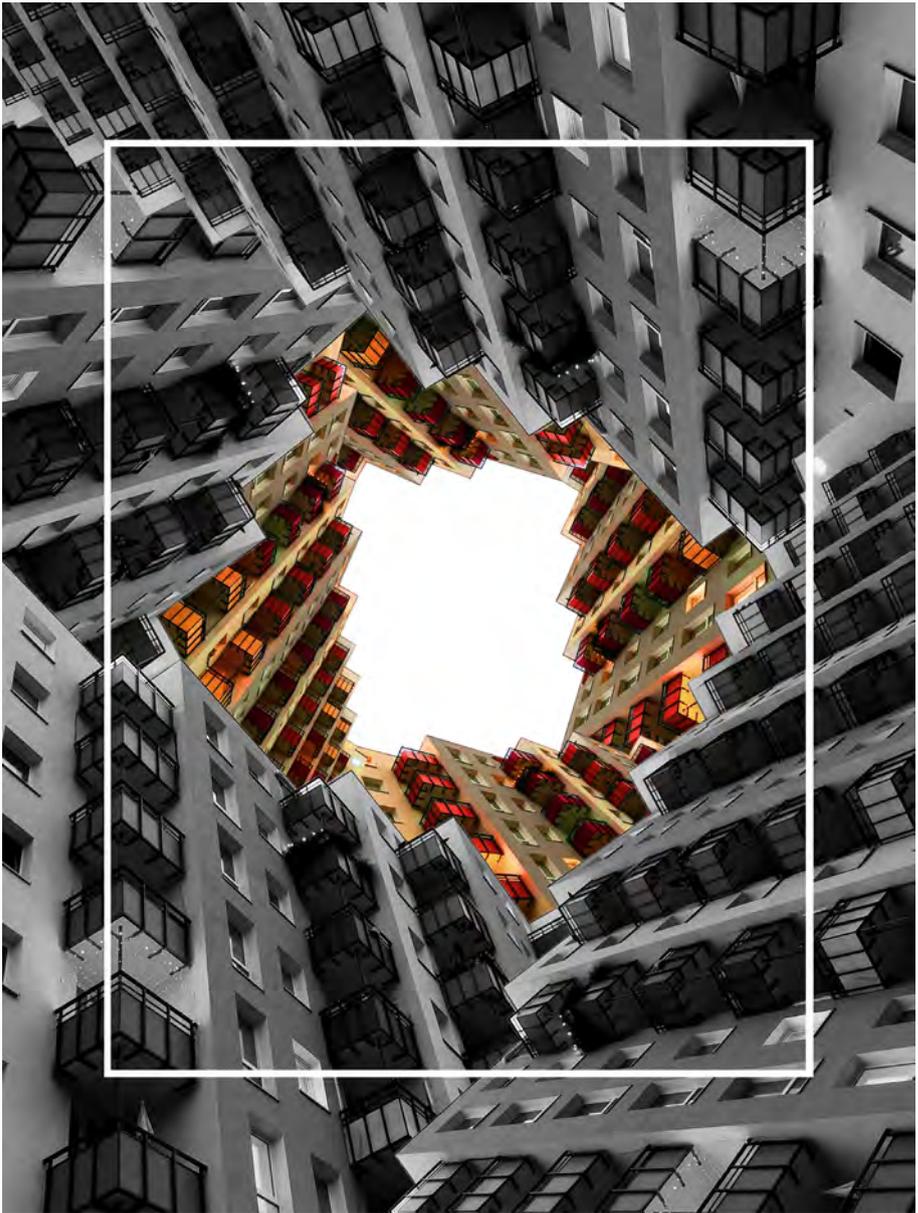
Aferdita Malaj, Daniel Jakaj, Igli Shehi
Joana Qamo, Melina Kühenapfel,
Nouha Koubaa, Sakhil Chaudhary,
Sanjana Mahesh Adi, Shiplu Chanda Avi



Ahmed Adegbami, Christina Terova,
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Irimi Bregasi, Keegan Arnold, Kiana Sasani,
Larita Inthisonne



Ayse Nil Sensu, Chintan Patel, Danail Pole,
Drilona Ndrejoni, Emma Schaack, Kimia
Bahari, Nnaemeka Nnadi, Orjada Ndreca



Amr Mobasher
Asad Tayyebi Fallah
Gabriela Lugones Guzman
Megi Duka
Nicole Tomczak
Renato Hamza
Sidorela Hoxha
Tarini Sharma
Tiziana Lohja

Mbyllja

Këto trregime verbale dhe vizuale ofrojnë një pasqyrë të dy lagjeve të ndryshme nga këndvështrimi i atyre që frekuentojnë dhe/ose jetojnë në to. Studentët do t'i përdorin këto gjetje në punën e tyre të mëtejshme në kuadrin e projektit për të zhvilluar koncepte inovative dhe kontekstuale për të mbështetur planifikimin me efikasitet të burimeve në vendbanimet informale pranë lumit Lana në Tiranë. Për më tepër, shpresojmë që këto trregime të arrijnë në vëmendjen e planifikueseve dhe vendimmarrësve të cilët janë të përfshirë në zhvillimin e këtyre zonave aktualisht dhe në të ardhmen.

Closing

The oral and visual narratives provide insight into two different neighborhoods from the perspectives of those who frequent and/or live in them. The students will utilize these findings for their further project work to develop innovative contextually appropriate concepts to support the resource efficient planning of the Informal Settlement near Lana River in Tirana. Furthermore, we hope these narratives reach the planners and decision makers who are involved with their current and future development.





This publication was developed as part of a workshop, which took place in two weeks of November 2021 as part of the collaboration between the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Polytechnic University of Tirana and the HafenCity University of Hamburg, funded by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) program "East-West Dialogue: University Dialogue with the West Balkans 2021". The first part of the workshop was facilitated online with focus on Tirana, and the second part was facilitated in person in and with focus on Hamburg. A second workshop and a corresponding publication will follow within this cooperation in 2022.

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"EAST-WEST DIALOGUE: UNIVERSITY DIALOGUE WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS 2021".