

# LAMU OLD TOWN WORLD HERITAGE SITE

## SUSTAINABLE URBAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (SUED) FOR A WORLD HERITAGE SITE THROUGH BLUE ECONOMY, SPATIAL PLANNING AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

### OVERVIEW

Once upon a time, Lamu was the most important trading centre in East Africa, a cultural melting pot with traders and sailors landing from all corners of the Indian ocean on the look-out for a gateway to Africa.

Over the centuries, local communities of fishing villages and farmsteads grew across Lamu Archipelago.

As a beacon of Swahili culture, rooted in its own identity of sailing, exploration and openness to visitors, Lamu's community thrived.

Today, Lamu County is home to 140k inhabitants, and is still recognised for its rich cultural and heritage assets including Lamu Old Town UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS).

### PROJECT CHALLENGES

Lamu faces multiple challenges. Due to the low-lying and level nature of its land, large parts of the county are susceptible to flooding including the Lamu Old Town World Heritage site, exacerbated by climate change.

Its remoteness, limited access, lack of opportunities, and a challenging urban development context, are among the factors that stifle growth potential.

Climate change also affects the livelihood of the fishing community, loss of biodiversity and pollution affects fishing activities and local ecosystems that support underwater life.

### CONCLUSION

Working with local communities and stakeholders, our team helped shape the Vision for Lamu's future:

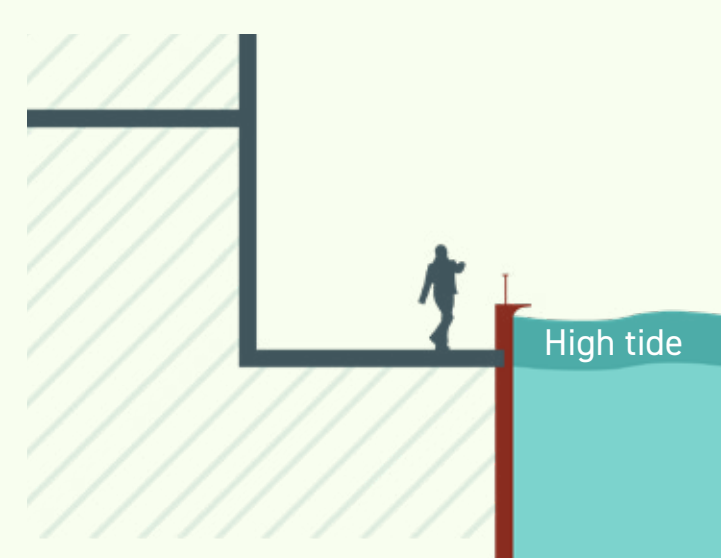
"Lamu shall be a model Municipality fostering sustainable, inclusive and community driven economic transformation governed by Blue Economy principles, safeguarding its unique natural, cultural and heritage assets while improving local livelihoods."

Our approach introduced the "Blue Economy" paradigm, namely a set of coordinated solutions to **protect, restore and develop** the island coastal ecosystem. Innovative solutions such as algae habitat restoration (Living Seawall), drainage systems and an experimental waterfront quay wall will help protect local livelihood, create much needed space for waterfront activities and acts as breakwater in case of storm surge.

These restoration solutions for the Old Town will help attract the right type of investment compatible with its World Heritage status and support local socio-economic growth.



Sensible village restoration



**Protect the Town**  
State of the art breakwater to protect against storm surge & sea level rise



**Restore the Village**  
Sensible village restoration & infrastructure and paving



**Create Space for People**  
Pontoon like cantilevers that expand space doubling up as fishing pontoons & breakwater



**Regenerate Ecosystem**  
'VOLVO's Living Sea Wall' currently tested in Sydney Harbour



### Team Members

Xiana Mendez Moldes, Maitreyee Kaushal, Kanak Mishra, Melis Atacan Kirman, Ingrid Siqueira Sousa, Malgorzata Mikos-Opyd, Vassiliki Kravva, Catalina Gallego Lopez, Tomasz Kopczewski, David Green, Philippa Ross, David Cox, Peter Alvey, Ben Smith, Hannah Patrick, Felipe Steigler, Chris Mcdougall, Lucrecia Bertelli, Davide Minniti