

eye-catching color
unique

vain
true
real



the inhabitants of Gjakova

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- separation of the two parts of the city
- dirty river
- unattractive riverfront design

- clean water = increased quality of life
- young people = future-oriented, dynamic...
- culture as a connecting part

WHAT'S THE POTENTIAL?

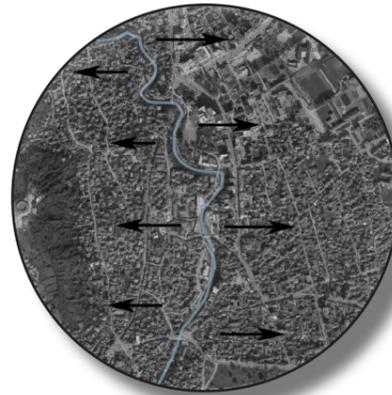
We are located in a small town in the west of Kosovo: Gjakova. Years after the terrible struggles for independence, the city has been rebuilt. Today you can find some beautiful architectural objects that clearly reflect the culture. Most of the cultural buildings have been reconstructed for the last few years.

Currently there are many problematic issues concerning this topic, however, there is a great effort in solving those and making the city fit for the future. For example, a station will be built to connect the city to the rail network. New housing projects and educational institutions are built in order to enhance the city's prestige. The problem with those projects is that they only provide local solutions for local problems. The projects lack in an overall concept which would improve the city's general situation. From our point of view, Gjakova develops into two different directions, marked by Krena, the river through the city. On one side is the old bazaar, the great mosque and some traditional buildings are located. Opposite are the newer properties like the university, the railway station and a few modern hotels complexes. The area around the river itself is unattractive to the inhabitants, new companies and even tourists: the riverbed is constructed to withstand floods, the promenade is unused and not very inviting, the water is dirty and separated from the surrounding roads by various buildings. Compared to many other cities, in which the river creates quality of life and places to relax, Gjakova shows poor usage of their given opportunities. Our focus will lie on this matter and it will be discussed in more details below.

A river with a well dissolved promenade offers quality of life for the whole surrounding region. Krena is a river with a partly rambling riverfront, which is surrounded by buildings. This environment can be changed into a thriving area through proper planning. Various projects and intervening actions in different rivers show what potential lies in this river and its bank design.

Furthermore, Gjakova is a city which has a high proportion of young people, and thus has someone who provides the city with a future. This can and should be utilized in a meaningful degree to develop the city. Young people, whether students, pupils, young families with children or just "young at heart" can upgrade places and refresh the area. This should be encouragement to shape and live together in these new places.

In addition, the city has a big cultural heritage which should also be considered. The history of the city and the country is marked by some events which give the city a special character. Especially these unique points should be used for networking and connecting the city within.



WHAT IS THE OVERARCHING GOAL?

>>LIFE

The main goal is to reclaim the area around the river, as well as the connection of the two parts of the city. In addition, the existence should be sustainable and future-oriented.

Important for the city is to connect the two parts and create a whole, to strengthen the community, the „WE-emotion“. In the future the river should no longer act as a separation, but serve as a common area. The father should find a place to play with his children. The youth is able to experience the city on their bikes. The tourists will find their way through the city and feel at home. The family is able to sit down with a snack on the promenade in the afternoon. The young couple is able to enjoy an outdoor concert. For this, the threshold flow is to be overcome and solved as a boundary.

Intended to avoid creating new borders we developed an elaborate road system, which connects existing traditional way with paths in a new manner. The connection of the city is enforced with feeling and attract attention. Even with the new atmosphere that is to be created, it is important to preserve the identity. It is also important to secure the area. People, whether it is a family, a young woman, a student or a tourist will feel comfortable in this area. Especially dark and disturbing areas will be avoided.

What is clearly not the objective of the project?

The city is historically as well as culturally dominated. This should not be changed despite the large interventions and should be handled with care. Although terms such as hightech play an important role nowadays, it should be mentioned that these exact styles may not always harmonize with the existing surroundings. The river has, so far, the function of a border. Thus, more edges and corners should be avoided. These barriers would divide the city again which would be a disappointing result and would not be the aim of this project.

What are the main activities?

FIRST STEP

WE care for atmosphere

- to assure clean water
- make the access to the water more attractive

SECOND STEP

WE connect the city

- thoughtful trail network which connects the districts
- socially acceptable areas

THIRD STEP

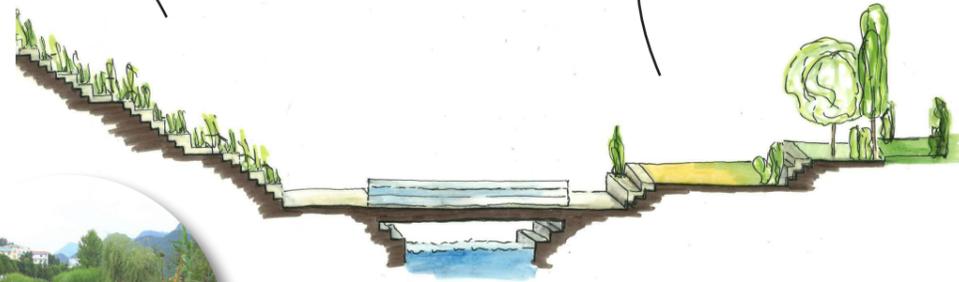
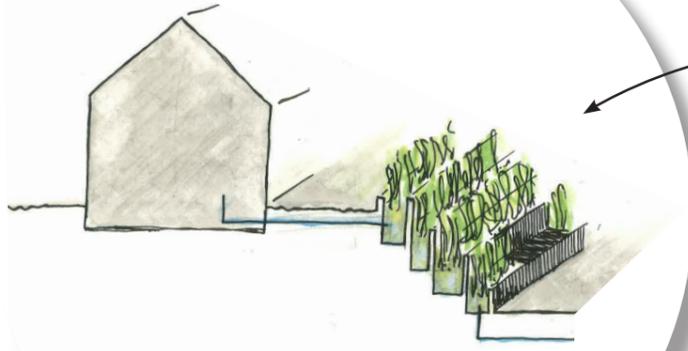
WE create a symbol

- symbol for the common future

FIRST
STEP

WE care for atmosphere

stepped wetlands



new riverside



adapts to the waterlevel

Fundamental to a working future is to improve the basic climate of the city. This includes above all the cleaning of the water. The big problem with cities is the garbage. On the reason of carelessness the streets, gardens and the water become polluted. This issue is solved with simple methods, and with the help of natural resources. All in all this is the first step, which must be implemented in order to create atmosphere.

The idea is to clean the water to the largest degree as possible. The first step is to set a screen at the beginning of our side and collect the waste from the surface. There, a box is attached to the existing bridge, which can be cleaned easily, and the garbage is not obviously restrained. In this way we can clean the water on a macroscopic level. The next step is to gather the water that comes out of the city, and clean it further. Here we collect the water and use plants and their biological functions to clean it. Furthermore, a stage system along individual bank is designed with a water circuit in it. The water runs into the first [or top] step.

The watercourse is slow, so the water can be cleaned by the plants. Microorganisms - mainly bacteria - eat the dirt. To one part this is broken down into water and carbon dioxide, and to some extent into biomass. A particular residence time, in which the waste water stays in these steps and plants, is important. During this period, the microorganisms must be in contact with the waste water and supply additional oxygen. This works with pipes, which spray the water again and again into the air. After that it may decrease slowly through the sand and the root system. The water level is approximately 15-20cm in the individual basins.

Finally, the water comes in a clean way to the river bed and is directed into the river. These plants are easy to build, the production is quite inexpensive and the operation is safe. Another advantage is that the levels are only partially visible, the main part is green which evaluates the river basin on. Over all to 4-5 square meters per inhabitant are expected.

This system enhances the quality of the water, and also of the air and the environment. This system is indeed planned only for this specific area, but is applicable by its simple construction along the entire river. Therefore, it is possible to clean the water from the very top.

The surface trash will be prevented with new dustbins along the river. The new clean flair of the city will help the inhabitants to rethink and in addition, pay more attention to the environment. This can be solved only by an overall approach and in particular with the support of the residents. Moreover, it must be mentioned that the water will not be clean overnight, this will take some time.

Despite everything, the river should not simply be covered up and function as a channel. It would certainly solve some problems, but would not be a proper solution for the city. Many cities have already tried this, but are failed in the end. It is of great importance to revitalize the river and to refresh it for the future.

What happens with the area around the river?

Furthermore, individual areas are upgraded. The park surrounding the hotel [3] is replanted and should offer new green spaces to the hotel guests on the one hand and a commonly shared space on the other hand. The existing carousel is restored and given a new meaning, it is the central focus of the new green area. New playgrounds will be offered to the children to play undisturbed. The people who do not have a garden have the opportunity to meet with their family there and give the children space. Furthermore, an area is built, which connects the park with the water [2]. Therefore, a stretch of sand is backfilled to make it possible to obtain beach feeling in summer. The area is a little bit lower than that of the park, which makes it possible to flood it during raining times.

The land next to the school [4] is upgraded and is available for the pupils. Sports fields and outdoor classrooms are built and revive the space again. Children and adolescents are the future of every city, so it is important for us, to teach them to respect the environment. The outside areas give children a feeling for the environment. They can even plant something like fruits and vegetables and reap in their individual garden.

At the close loop [5] the levels are designed as seats. This creates a spacious grandstand, whereby the focus is on the other side of the river. There is a stage for entertainment (from theater to cinema to concert ..) and provides another meeting possibility to the inhabitants.

The following section is intended to be a "shopping mall" [6]. The close position of the buildings creates an interesting space, which should be availed as a typical promenade. The vacant properties on the west side are glazed and could contain shops and stores. The new promenade stimulates international companies, why they also start to settle there. The area in front of it serves as open space. Small bistros provide food and revive the bank. The building will be opened at some parts to enable connection to the hospital. The park in this space [7] is upgraded, and the people have the opportunity to experience the bridge.

The eastern shore is also restored. The existing building will also serve as a shop. The square in front of it obtains a new characteristic through combining it with plants.

The next part is supplied to the residential sector. We want to create some areas where residents [8] can relax and have a good time. In addition, some outdoor sports equipment are built, offering training opportunities [9].

How is the compound of the neighborhoods guaranteed finally?

The next step in the concept is the connection between the individual parts of the city. It is not only important to connect the shore and create interesting places, but also to involve the inner neighborhoods. Therefore, individual points are picked up and connected; these include interesting cultural buildings, hotels or shops. People notice within the city that a new habitat is available. In times of peace a new cohabitation is important, which is made possible by special links. The town should not be dominated by individual roads and paths, but each road should give comfort. The city should be connected by a large network including for example cultural axis and so on.

Furthermore we defined a ring around the new area. Inside of this the pedestrian is higher than the car driver, due that the mood is going to be more relaxed.

Symbolic of these compounds and in turn as an anchor point, a bridge is built, which winds its way through the new territory.

- The second step in the project is the design of the river bank.
- The river bank should not serve as a pure water treatment plant, but should offer space for relaxation and to spend time there. The levels are a fundamental element, but also serve as seating accommodation or as steps. The bank should give people space to relax. This space is prepared by removing the slopes along the river. Through the erection of stages one has direct access to the clean water. Residents can cool their legs or can play with some small paper boats in summer. They also can get used to the shore area and be able to forget the idea of the hitherto existing border and can become accustomed to the new space.



WE create a symbol

How can the river and the bridge become the new focus of the city?

In order to connect the bridge to the existing road network, these lights will be (up to major roads for example) continued to some specific point at which it is possible to identify the junction to enter the bridge. Another elements will be trash cans, which ensure that the area remains clean and supports a clean future. These elements are supposed to have a unified design.

How does the bridge work?

The form emerged from defining major axes, places and situations. These are joined by a seam, as a sign of the connection of the different areas and as a sign of future. Each side has its qualities, which work together on the same level. The bridge is supposed to work individual and to stretch over the new shore. It presents itself as an independent object. The shape is continuously visible and presents itself with a colorful surface, in purple. The color is eye-catching and marks the symbol. The most important situations are captured, the resulting spaces react only partially with it. Individual trees penetrate the bridge, why you can experience the treetop. The idea behind this is that in summer children can pick their own fruits. Furthermore, the difference in height is illustrated. Through the vertical play the seam is clarified and strengthened, you can cope the fields without any steps. The key example is that a cyclist can cross the bridge without getting of the bike. The slope produces an exciting experience and is easy to deal with despite the differences in height. Through the ups and downs the emerging space is made palpable.

The squares and parks are only touched a little bit and subordinate to the bridge. The appearance of the bridge is simple, but impresses by its design. The railing should be adapted and co-migrate the momentum. The base surfaces are greened partly, the rest of it allows cycling.

To provide well-being, in addition, the area is re-lit. A strip of light along the parapet provides sufficient light on the bridge. The entrances to the bridge as well as the newly created outdoor spaces provide safety with newly designed street lighting.



These are some interventions to the environment, how can this be made attractive for residents?

The area is converted in small steps. On the one hand it makes it easier for funding, on the other hand it is more comfortable for the inhabitants. Probably the most important concept in this subject is: participation. That means the social level is above the whole concept. The plan is to work with the residents from the outset on the design of the new green areas, where people are able to plan and build together on the new project. An interesting keyword is also urban gardening, which is flourishing in many cities at the moment. By creating gardens and planting fruit trees or other plants, the population is able to consume fresh fruits and vegetables.

The bridge is provided with a rib mesh. Many bridges in the world are decorated with padlocks, which symbolize love. Couples in love depend on them to show their happiness and to perpetuate it for ever. This topic was added and adjusted to the concept and based free the motto: the way to the heart is through the stomach. In our case, flower pots are hung, which can be decorated with hearts and provided with favorite plants.

To sum up, the new system works for itself. The redesigned area is to be a new leisure destination through the individual plants and new features. Whether to relax in the sun, to read a book, play with children or take part in an event, the place will contribute to a vibrant and enjoyable environment.