

A multidisciplinary student team from Aalto University designing sustainable water solutions to move a community in Kampala, Uganda from surviving to thriving



Katanga settlement is located between Makerere University and Mulago Hospital in Kampala, capital of Uganda. Image by Stephanie Kluz

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A student team from Aalto University is developing a concept design that explores solutions to the water issues facing the Katanga settlement in Kampala, Uganda. The team is collaborating with a Ugandan student team from Makerere University with aims to form a vision forward for Katanga and its vibrant community that is inclusive and sustainable.

Project Amaka consists of five students with backgrounds in water engineering, collaborative design, computer sciences and creative sustainability. The five-month project embarked in January 2020 as a part of the Sustainable Global Technologies Studio course at Aalto University School of Engineering, and has included a two-week learning camp to Uganda in February. Guided by their project mentors, the students have worked to solve sustainability challenges in Katanga through a collaborative design process with the Makerere student team during the past months.

The challenges faced by the target community in Katanga are related to housing and water among others. The Makerere student team has developed an adaptable, low-cost housing concept *Emu-ku'emu*, while the Aalto student team is enhancing the water sensitivity of the proposed houses and surrounding neighbourhood. The team is also developing functional design concepts that would improve water supply, accessibility and urban greening within the whole community. The vision developed together with the residents of Katanga in community workshops is to move the community from surviving to thriving, a path that is sustainable and inclusive to everyone.

“The project has allowed us to develop and test skills of co-creation, design and engagement, but perhaps most importantly we have discovered the power of multidisciplinary and the potential it has for solving complex issues”, says Project Amaka team member Jarrod Luxton.

Project Amaka is enabled by Problem Based Learning (PBL) East Africa, a joint initiative between University of Dar es Salaam, University of Nairobi, Makerere University and Aalto University. Coordinated by [Aalto Global Impact](#) and funded by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the goal of [PBL East Africa](#) is to promote research, education and collaboration in the field of sustainable social innovation.

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