

ATELIER KANINA

100 ALBANIAN VILLAGES: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
TOWARD URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES

AUGUST 2019, VIENNA

SUPERWEN
architecture urbanism



AUSTRIAN
EMBASSY
TIRANA



DI SHQIPTARI ZHMIU
ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

AKPT
AGJENCIA KOMBËTARE E
PLANIFIKIMIT TË TERRITORIT



1 WORKSHOPS

The workshops took place on the 08th and 09th of July in Kanine, Vlora. There were organized by Superwien Urbanism ZT OG in cooperation with AKPT (NTPA - National Territorial Planning Agency of Albania). The main goals were:

1. to implement participatory and co-creative approaches in the 100 villages program and
2. to get as much input as possible about the challenges and opportunities of Kanina, with a focus on the central square.

In the workshops different tools and methods were used in order to gain information from the local stakeholders.

PARTICIPANTS

In total, aproximately 40 people took place during both days. The following stakeholder groups were present:

- Superwien Urbanism: Mara Haas, Dejan Coba
- AKPT: Mikel Tanin, Antonela Kola, Ridiena Sulaj
- Local residents and shop owners
- Administrator of Kanina: Astrit Aliraj
- Teacher/historian and resident: Kastriot Hoxha
- Vlora municipality: Fatjon Devollaj - Department of Infrastructure and Project Implementation, Klaudio Mehmetaj, Ilir Kokuri, Rubin Hekurani (Day 1)
- Albanian Development Fund: Joli Meçaj, Fabjola Meçaj (Day 1)

AGENDA

Day 1: 08.07.2019 – The Past & Present

- 09:30- 10:30 **Activity #1** Walkshop: Central Square
- 10:30- 11:30 **Activity #2** Emotional Mapping
- 11:30- 13:00 Video interviews
- 13:00- 15:30 Lunch break
- 15:30- 18:00 Mapping activities (two groups)
- 18:00- 19:00 **Activity #3** Goals Grid
- 19:00- 20:00 **Activity #4** Time Machine

Day 2: 09.07.2019 – Future Vision

- 09:30- 11:00 **Activity #5 (1)** Feedback Central Square
- 11:00- 12:00 Video interviews
- 12:00- 14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00- 16:00 **Activity #5 (2)** Street workshop
- 16:00- 18:00 **Activity #6** Mapping Activities

DAY 1: THE PAST & PRESENT

Activity #1: Walkshop: Central Square

MAIN GOAL: Get to know influential stakeholders and get a first impression of the central square

RESULTS:

- Past development of the central square: two informal buildings that were built on the central square have been demolished (square is now built on their first floor)
- Potential projects: reutilization of unfinished Palace of Culture, renovation of Tekke



Activity #3: Goals Grid

MAIN GOAL: Find out about the main challenges and opportunities of Kanina

RESULTS:

- Most relevant development for residents: proper drinking water infrastructure
- The central square and the castle are the two key elements, where the historical value and the cultural heritage of Kanina can be best displayed on
- There is a lack of accomodation facilities for tourists, which is an opportunity to generate local economy



Activity #2: Emotional Mapping

MAIN GOAL: Find out which places the residents like and which the don't like, identify areas of intervention

RESULTS:

- The central square and the castle seem to be the favorite places of locals, as they represent the history of the town
- They also think that these places need intervention, as they are not used properly at the moment
- There are several informal dumping sites in Kanina, which have a negative impact on the image of the town



Activity #4: Time Machine

MAIN GOAL: Learn more about the history of central square, and how it can be used for the future of the town

RESULTS:

- Many informal buildings from the 1990s in south-western part; construction of main road started in 2019, not finished yet
- Over communism, many activities took place at the central square and the castle; lack in activities today
- Kanina used to be very rich in the beginning of the 20th century (coucil of elders supported thos in need)
- The good reputation of Kanina was lost during communism; in recent years, more and more visitors come from Kosovo, who are interested in the history



DAY 2: FUTURE VISION

Activity #5 Feedback Central Square

MAIN GOAL: Get feedback from the locals on the proposed projects about the central square, done by Vlora municipality and the 100+ Villages Academy

RESULTS:

- Participants like the propsed lighting and the restoration of the Palace of Culture and the Tekke
- They would add more trees or other shady elements, as well as benches and garbage bins
- They suggested to place the bust in front of the Tekke (where Ismail Qemali was buried)
- A small kiosk, an information point for tourists and a public toilet could be placed on the central square



Activity #6 Mapping Activities

MAIN GOAL: Get more information on site and update our maps with the latest changes done in the village

RESULTS:

- Kanina is divided into five neighborhoods
- There are some small shops and bars, especially along the main road
- Identification of underused traditional stone buildings that could be turned into guesthouses
- In the Resulaj neighborhood there is potential for a sidewalk with a view



2 EMERGING TOPICS

The Emerging Topics have been extracted from the analysis of the workshop results and the interviews with local residents and the administrator of Kanina.

1 Utilization of cultural heritage

- Cultural historical assets could be utilized to act as catalysts promoting the tourism development
- On the central square many cultural assets from different periods of time are located: the Palace of

“We are a village with a great history. We pretend that without Kanina, there wouldn’t be the city of Vlora and without Vlora there wouldn’t be Albania today.” (Kastriot Hoxha)

- Culture built during the communism area, the Tekke of Kanina and the grave of the Pasha from the early 15th century (which are declared as cultural monuments) and the bust of Ismail Qemali
- The Palace of Culture, which has never been finished completely, is not being used at the moment and in a bad condition; there is potential to replace it by a gathering place for the locals, which could eventually strengthen the social aspects of this community
 - The castle of Kanina is positioned in a geographical strategic hill 360 meter above sea level and overlooks the whole bay of Vlora and the Sazanisland
 - Other cultural objects/ monuments are the Kujtim Hamza’s house, Shefik Begaj’s house and the lapidary of Skenderbeg, which needs restauration add more value to the cultural heritage aspect
 - Cultural activities and events: the Generations Meeting and the Skenderbeg and Donica’s Wedding take place at the castle on a yearly basis, organized by the local cultural organization “Kanina association”

2 Public space

- Public spaces have been neglected through the years and need intervention in order to become functional and attractive not only for local residents, but also for tourists
- The central square is the most important public space, because of its historical meaning as well as its central position

- Residents would like to have a place not just to meet and spend their free-time, but also a place that they can identify themselves with and that shows the history of the village
- The center square is an abandoned area used partly as a parking space, surrounded by abandoned build-

“We want to improve the center square, because it is the mirror of history of Kanina.” (Administrator)

- ings (the Palace of Culture, the Tekke), there is lack of street furniture and vegetation and shade
- The area around the mosque has potential to become the “the glory square”, where the memorials of important figures that helped shape the Albanian state could be placed (proposed by the historian)
 - There are several informal “neighborhood’s corners”, where the elderly generation meets in the afternoon and plays table games like chess
 - The younger generation and the children usually play in the streets in front of their houses and do not have a proper place to meet each other after school.

3 Tourism development

- Tourism sector is the main economic driver for Kanina’s development
- Cultural tourism is very important, but also agro-tourism which has become a new trend all over Albania has a lot of potential here in Kanina
- One main challenge regarding tourism development is that the touristic season is concentrated only on summer months
- The castle is definitely the place that is being visited the most: in 2018 there were 3,000 visitors (mostly from Kosovo); there are 150 visitors a week and 600 a month, according to the tour guide
- Lack of accomodation for tourists: At the castle there are a lot of tourists asking to rent houses for a week or 10 days (tour guide), but there is only one hotel “Vila Amantia” with a capacity of 16 beds, which can be booked online; the other facilities lack in standard information and can be found just by “word of mouth” (Mundpropaganda)
- Currently, there are two private objects being built, that, according to the locals, will be used as guest-houses for the tourists

- The old traditional stone houses that are spread over the village pose an excellent asset that can be turned into guesthouses and expand the already insignificant touristic accommodation capacities of the village

4 Waste management

- The main challenge seems to be that the garbage is thrown everywhere on the ground informally and creates some garbage piles
- There are no (public) garbage bins or disposal sites in Kanina and the waste collection does not operate; This service should normally be done by the municipality of Vlora
- There is an immediate need to deal with this issue

5 Water infrastructure/supply

- The water infrastructure is amortized and the water supply is limited to 1 – 2 hours per day.
- Especially the southern and newest part of the village suffer from this phenomenon: In this area the water runs freely on the road and some water pipes are being damaged by the weight of the heavy trucks that pass through this road
- Some of the residents use private wells, but this doesn’t assure about the drinking water quality
- All participants of the workshops agree that it needs investment in order to fill their basic needs according water infrastructure

6 Road infrastructure

- The main road that has not been finished yet
- The inner roads are lacking lighting
- Layers of concrete cover the old traditional streets that have been made out of cobblestone
- There is a high potential to add a pavement to the main road, which would offer a fantastic view for the pedestrians, walking from the main square to the south of the village

7 Youth migration

- Another growing concern of the locals is that the youth is leaving the village, due to several social/ economical reasons

This is a serious matter, the abandonment of the village.” (School director)

- The school director states that there is a serious decline of school children in Kanina: This year, there are 15 students that finish the school and go away and only 4 have been registered for the next year
- Most of the youth migrates to the cities or abroad after they have finished the elementary school: most of them make use of the short distance to Vlora
- In the bigger cities, it is more attractive for them to finish their higher education and also easier to find employment
- The development of tourism would create new job opportunities for the youth and could help smoothen this negative trend

8 Natural landscape

- The natural landscape and the panoramic views are definitely seen as strengths by the local residents
- Kanina should make use of this unique element/feature that can support the tourism sector

“I think that it’s rare to find another village in Albania like Kanina with its beautiful views, its relief and hills with olive trees” (new-comer to Kanina)

- It is also important to preserve of the natural landscape, which has been threatened by the construction of informal buildings and also environmental pollution

9 Local products

“On the side of the resources, it has a tradition for the production of olive oil and honey” (resident)

- These local resources present a high potential that can be a key factor in improving the local economy
- According to the administrator of Kanina, every family has 150 olive trees, however the olive production needs a lot of investment, especially better inner roads so that the trucks can collect the olives
- The local products are also an element which can be used to support the tourism development in Kanina: a small facility (market) with local products could be arranged at an easily accessed place (e.g. the center square) for the tourists

3 KANINA DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Development Goals are structured within five overarching topics. They are based on the Emerging Topics and the other results of the workshops. The proposed Strategic Interventions are directly linked to these Development Goals.

1 Foster cultural heritage as economic asset

- Use heritage as trigger for tourism and economy
- Protection and restoration of historical buildings: tekke, Shefik Begaj's house, Kujtim Haza's house, lapidary of Skenderbeg
- Create local identity through local products (olives)
- Create economic opportunities and jobs / establish branding of local products for the local and regional market

2 Create attractive public spaces for locals and visitors

- Activation of central square and castle through the organization of cultural activities (e.g. the Generations Meeting and the Skenderbeg and Donica's Wedding)
- Improve quality of street design and public spaces (e.g. proper lighting)
- Create gathering points for local residents with commercial and non-commercial areas
- Create attractive small-scale spaces for "neighborhood corners" where locals can meet
- Better organization of parking system
- Increase number of pavements
- Plant trees in public spaces to provide shadows and protection from the sunlight

3 Boost tourism development

- Increase the number of accommodation for tourists; establish agro tourism as popular form of tourism
- Improve orientation for tourists, in favor of a more diverse tourism that tourists explore Kanina and its surrounding area
- Improve skills in tourism
- Develop a strategy for seasonal tourism, which makes Kanina less dependent on summer tourism

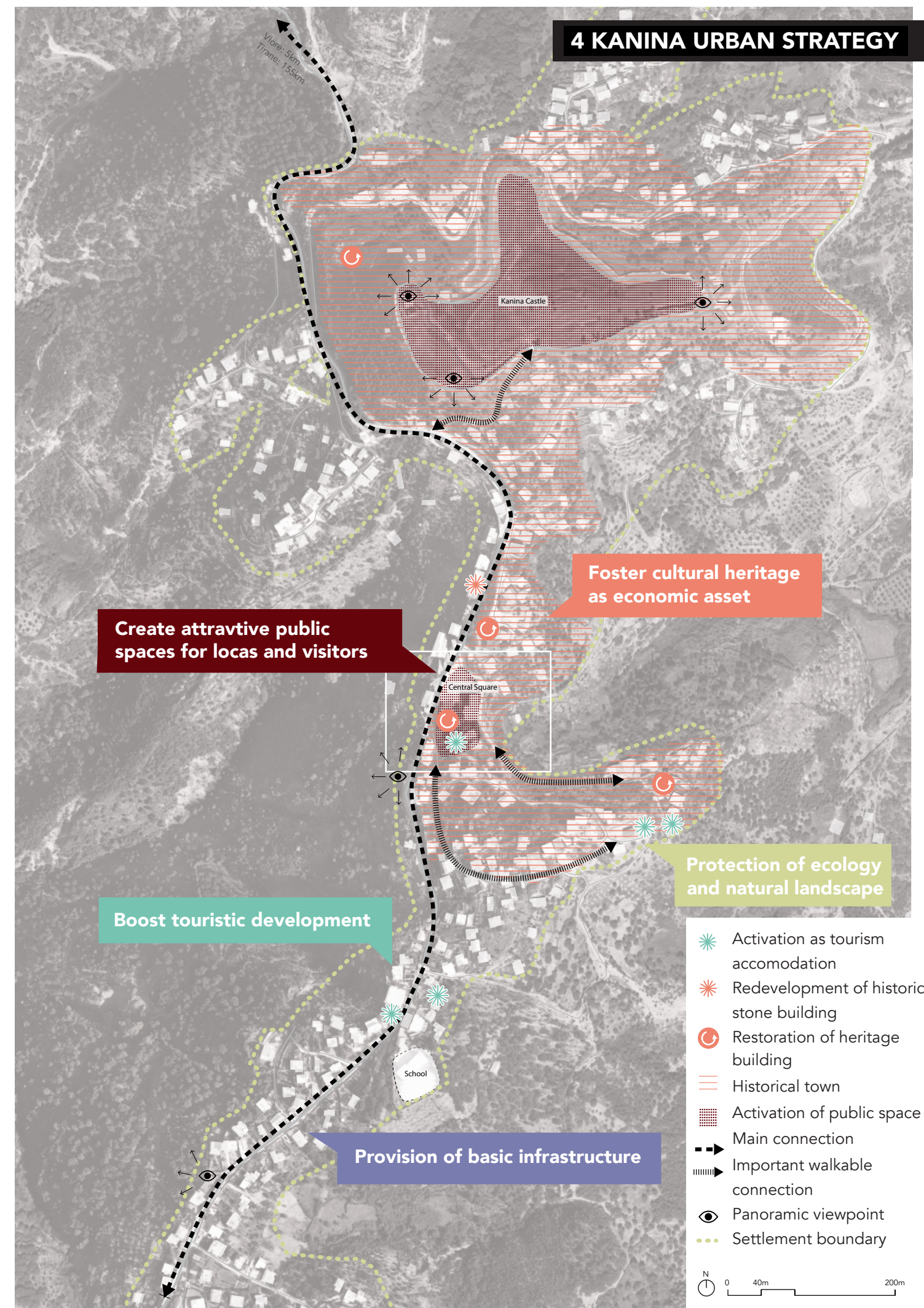
4 Protection of ecology and natural landscape

- Protection of Olive Trees and natural landscape, which is perceived as important assets for the town's identity
- Better organization of waste management; informal dump grounds have to be avoided through extension of proper waste management
- No further extension of settlement boundaries and better regulation of informal constructions

5 Improve quality of living through provision of basic infrastructure

- Improve water infrastructure, especially in southern part of Kanina and quality of drinking water
- Invest in quality of inner roads, which are important for cultivation of olive trees
- Provide internet access (WIFI) in public spaces (at the central square and at the castle)

4 KANINA URBAN STRATEGY



5 PROJECT PROPOSALS - CENTRAL SQUARE

