

Ka Cokere (The Meeting Place): Apac's future rooted in tekwaro (cultural norms and beliefs)

by

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Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kmaq'i,
the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.
We are all Treaty people.

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To mom, dad, Jasmine and Patricia.

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Abstract

In Uganda, Lango culture is endangered owing to its limited study, and reliance on oral traditions, under threat from declining older populations. Preserving and incorporating local knowledge is necessary to provide direction and foundations for the region's future development.

This thesis seeks to explore the role of program and architectural form in merging the storage and learning of tekwaro (cultural norms and beliefs) and contemporary knowledge to create a kit of parts that transfer agency to the community to innovate solutions to improve their daily lives while retaining local identity.

This thesis cross pollinates the rooted Lango culture and universal technology-based civilisation in a rural context to create new spaces as well as adapting to existing ones, through place and placemaking, and materiality to allow community members to learn and test this shared knowledge, to exhibit their outcomes for common benefit.

Acknowledgements

It takes a village to raise a child - African proverb

This thesis is a celebration of the work put in by many contributors to my research and design process. Firstly, I would like to thank my family for the support they have and continue to give me. Apwoyo ma tek.

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I would like to thank Arch. Tony Mukangura for his assistance throughout the thesis and for all the late calls to bounce ideas off of and also, iron out tiny details. Similarly, I would like to thank Isioma Mafiana and Philippa Keri Ndukwe for their help through the program and guiding me using their past work, Philippa's work was in Northern Uganda as well, which was handy for me. Tony Rukongwa and Daniel Baldassari, thank you for the crunch time assists with the rendering and modeling for my designs that freed up time for me to fine tune other aspects of my presentation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Giants in Slumber

The need for Lango culture's return to the country's map has been in the news recently. The late former deputy speaker of parliament and Langi man, Jacob Oulanyah, noted at the commencement of the Lango Palace in Lira, that while the Acholi and Baganda have done remarkably well in conserving and promoting their culture, the Lango have lost theirs (Apunyo 2021).

On a more personal note, having lived in Kampala which is in Buganda region in Uganda for most of my life and needing to know English and Luganda as the means to get by, I'm aware of my disconnect to my Lango culture. This is evident in my non fluency in Leb Lango and the rarity of my visits to Apac, my ancestral home. In December 2022, I visited Apac, I learnt the meaning of my names, and that spurred an interest in learning more about my tribal history to place myself within the culture and develop my Lango identity.

NEWVISION

HOME NEWS MEDIA SUPPLEMENTS TENDERS NOTICES PODCASTS E-PA

VISION TV & RADIO BUKEDDE AMAWULIRE KAMPALA SUN

Construction of Lango cultural palace commences

© Feb 23, 2021

The project is expected to support the cultural institution and promote tourism in the region.

The construction of Lango Cultural Palace Complex commissioned over the weekend is expected to be completed within 18 months.

Deputy Speaker of Parliament Jacob Oulanyah on Saturday represented President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni at the ground-breaking ceremony in Lira City.

The project is expected to support the cultural institution and promote tourism in the region.

Oulanyah who represented President Yoweri Museveni expressed disappointment at the manner in which Lango is losing its cultural values.

"If there is a tribe that has preserved its culture is not more than Acholi and Baganda but the Lango has lost theirs," Oulanyah said.

He said there was nothing cultural at the function and yet he expected to see the numerous dances and traditional foods.

Jacob Oulanyah's remarks on the state of Lango culture compared to Baganda and Acholi (Apunyo 2021)

Revival Efforts

There has been a push to revive Lango culture and put it on par with the Acholi and Baganda. The Lango Cultural Foundation (LCF) have a strategic plan to conserve and promote Lango culture, strengthen LCF institutional capacity, use culture for socio-economic development, promote unity, peace, and stability and mobilize resources for LCF activities (LCF 2023). This is in line with Apac Municipal Council's plans to grow the tax base by adding new revenue streams, acquiring new land for recreational activities and with the national objectives to focus on increasing science, technology, innovation, and increasing tourism's revenue from US\$1.45 billion to US\$ 1.86 billion by 2024/2025 financial year outlined by the National Planning Authority (NPA) in the 3rd National Development Plan (NPA 2020).



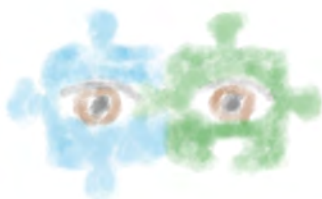
Dancing at Adacara, 2023

Also, there have been grassroots initiatives to compliment the top-down approach. For example, Adacara is an annual local festival, organized by Radio Apac, aiming to showcase cultural heritage and foster creativity and technological advancement highlights a readiness to learn about the culture and innovate (COMNETU 2023). It derives from historical gathering of community to socialize and pray for rain/ streams to flow with water. Also, in April 2023, the Awitong (clan chief) of Pala Ocol and Lango minister for Diplomacy and International Relations, Dickson Ogwang commissioned the "My tribe, my identity" documentary to collect and share stories of great Lango ancestors for the youth to learn (Bless 2023).

These efforts showcase the readiness of the Lango community to revive and promote our culture through storytelling, ceremony, and innovation. However, the built environment has not received similar attention in this revival drive. For example, the palace's form focuses on geometric shapes which while produces an interesting building to look at, doesn't speak to the culture of the region in which it's to be built. The proposed Apac Municipal Council (AMC) headquarters also have form which works as a machine, at the cost of appearing out of place within the urban language of Apac.

Two Eyed Seeing

We emphasize developing shared abilities to respectfully work with our different epistemologies and ontologies, see with the strengths or the best in our different worldviews (i.e. employ Two-Eyed Seeing), find common ground in innovative and meaningful ways, use visuals to complement and extend our word-based concepts, and engage other approaches that enable newer (to the academy) forms of research inquiry and community participation (while continuing to value the more familiar, conventional methodologies). (Bartlett, M. Marshall and A. Marshall 2012 280)



Two-eyed seeing illustrated

My experiences in Canada have exposed me to a different world view and they present the opportunity to see with one eye the lessons I've learned here and with the other, my Lango ancestry, and to use both for the betterment of my home. Through my thesis, I aim to contribute to the revival and promotion of Lango culture by creating places that create a sense of belonging through history, represent culture through program, form, and the future of Apac by providing a home for innovation.

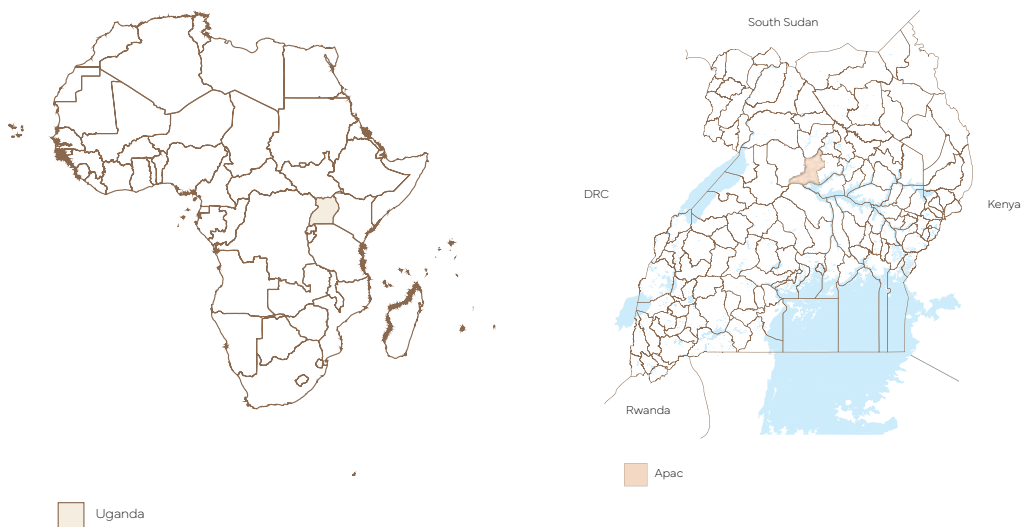
Chapter 2: Wan Lango

National Context

Location

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa bordered by South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Democratic Republic of Congo to the north, east, south, southwest, and west respectively. Youth are the majority with 81% of Ugandans under 35 years old. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) notes that they constituted 2% of population at the 2014 census and projected 1.6% by 2020 (Adriku 2018)

Apac district is in the Lango subregion of northern Uganda along the Nile and on the shores of Lake Kwania. The district is on the northern Ugandan plateau with vast swathes of flat undulating land, savannah, some woodland, and wetlands (AMC 2020, 8). Apac municipality is drained by the Arocha swamp which flows west to the Nile. Neighbouring districts are Kwania, Masindi, Kole, Alebtong, and Oyam. It is located 280 km from the capital city, Kampala, via the Masindi Port ferry.



L-R: Locating Uganda within Africa, Locating Apac District within Uganda



Locating Apac Municipality within Apac District (1:1,000,000)



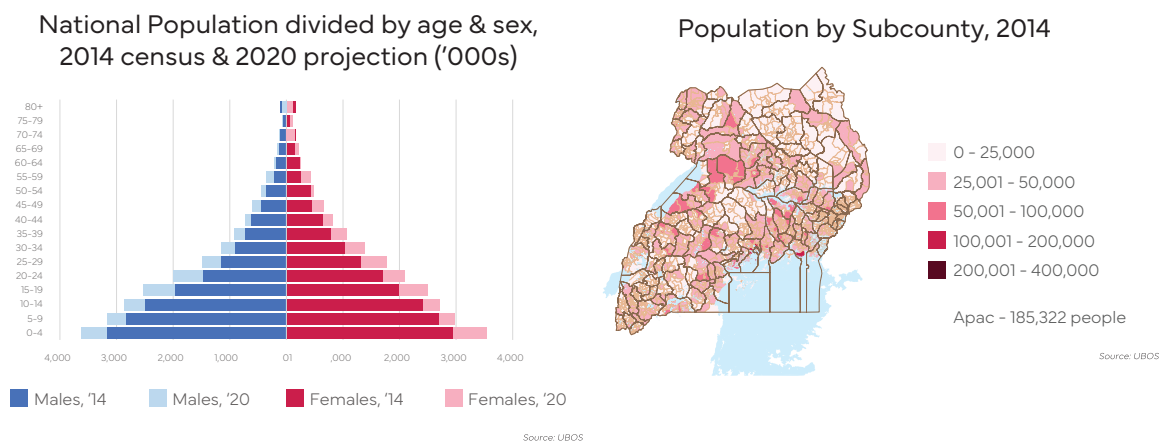
Boarding the Masindi Port Ferry



Crossing the Nile to Apac. The Masindi Port - Kungu ferry is important as it connects Apac district to the rest of Uganda's road network

Demographics

At the 2014 census, the district had a population of 185,322 people, with the number projected to reach 250,000 by 2023 (Adriku 2018).



Selected Population Data for Uganda and Apac district. (Adriku 2018)

Economic Summary

Per UBOS, Apac's major economic activity is agriculture, employing 51% of the population. Other economic activities include retail, carpentry, transportation, radio communications (AMC 2020, 23). The main recreational facilities include the Mayor's Gardens and Boma Grounds, a multi-purpose open field in the downtown Apac.

Local Infrastructure

Within Apac municipality, safe water coverage is 78% with National Water & Sewerage Corporation accounting for 30% and the rest covered by boreholes and rain harvesting (AMC 2020, 21). Approximately 23% of the municipality is connected to the national hydroelectric grid, with other power sources including solar, gas and wood fuel, most used for cooking.

Cultural Context

Origins

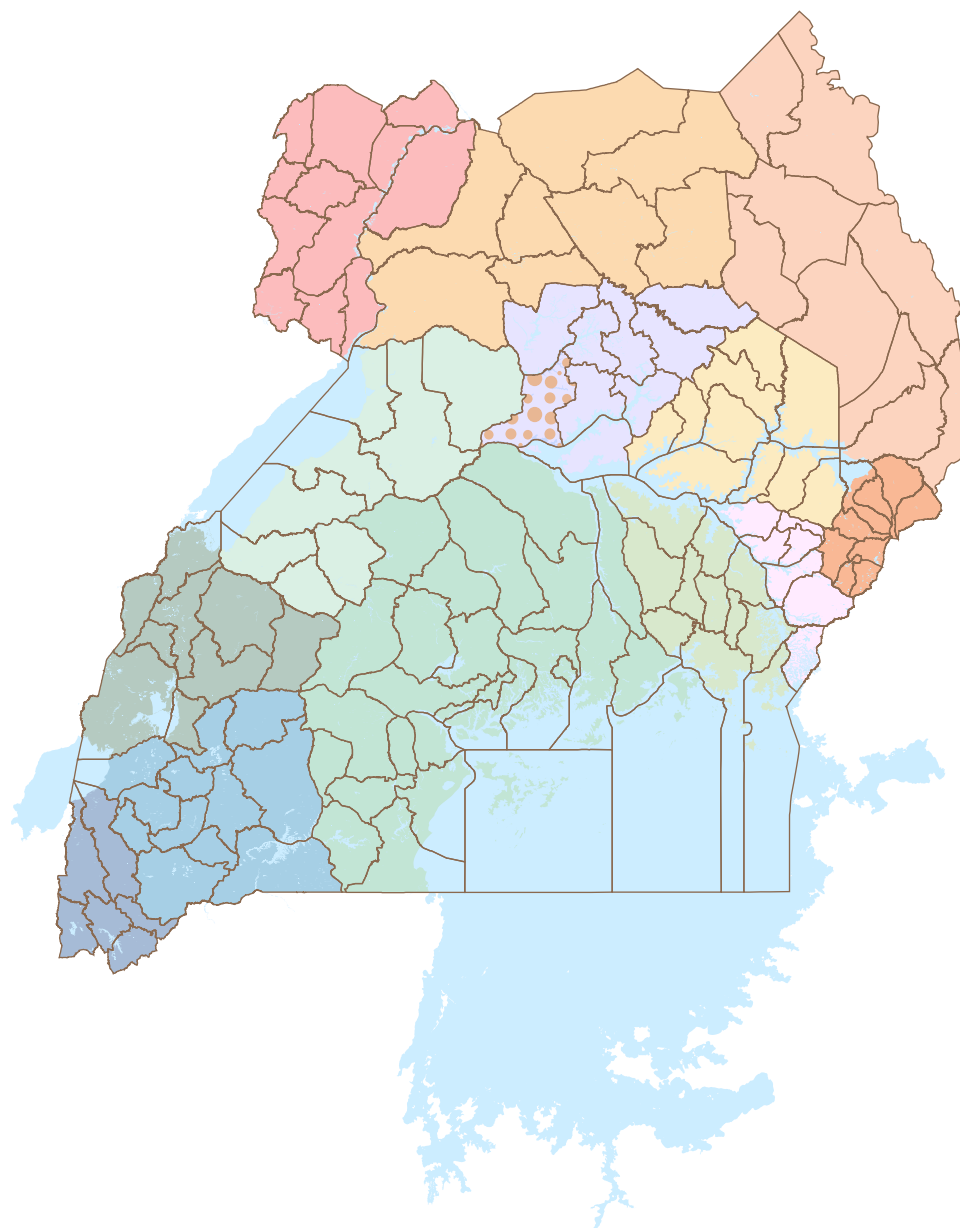
Lango people trace their origins from Bako country, North Omo River, Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia) from where they migrated in search of water and pasture for their animals. They settled in many small groups in from the Imatong hills, present day Acholi territory, to the shores of Lake Kyoga. Some key events include the Madi Invasion of 1000 AD split them into 2 groups, one absorbed by the Lutuko in present day South Sudan, and those who stayed in Uganda migrated east and northeast to present day Karimojong country. Between 1750 & 1800, the latter returned to reclaim their home at lake Kyoga via Otuke hill where they have remained to date (Owiny 2021).

Social Organization

Jo Tura (family) was the primary social unit and remains so today. This provided security, cohesion, and expansion benefits. *Jo Daggola* (Lineages) are groups of families tracing their ancestry to a common grandfather as Lango society is patrilineal. These would live close together to consult help and participate in marriage and birth ceremonies. *Atekere* (clans) are the larger societal groups, and these were led by *Awitong* (clan chiefs), responsible for knowledge transfer, protection, officiating ceremonies, settling disputes and general peace time operations.



Hierarchy of social units



Cultural Regions

West Nile	Bunyoro	Busoga
Bugisu	Buganda	Lango
Acholi	Tooro	Bukedi
Karamoja	Ankole	Apac
Teso	Kigezi	

Ethnic make up of Uganda showing the different cultural regions. Apac, my thesis district, is located within the Lango region. (1:5,000,000)

Culture of Ceremony

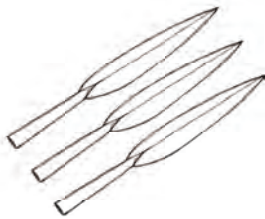
Other notable cultural events include *Ewor*, the age-set ceremony, where boys aged 16-20 are initiated into manhood. From Benson Okello, a researcher in Uganda, the process is as follows.

The initiates were taught the art of Lango politics besides the social values that were imparted to them by the elders. They were kept in a solitary place for three days where they underwent, difficult training, sleeping outside in the bush under Olam tree (sycamore), they ate saltless food during that period. The act of rainmaking, and war tactics were imparted to the youth (Okello 2015, 48).

The period was marked by a state of total peace. During the period, every Lango was supposed to be at peace with neighbours. All weapons (spears) were to be left in houses except the sacred spears of the elders (Okello 2015).

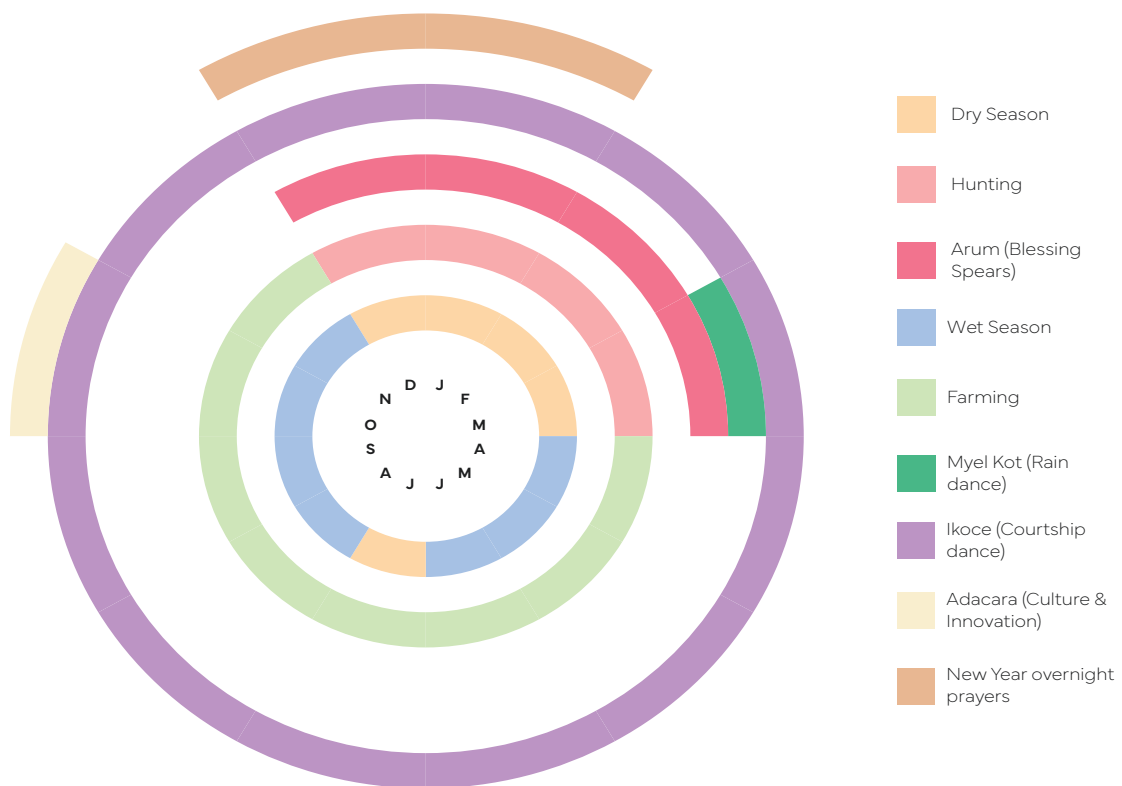
Today, *Ikoce* is one of the surviving dances. It is a courtship dance and commonly done during weddings. In addition, Radio Apac hosts Adacara in October. This is an annual celebration of Lango culture, sport, and innovation with events like dance, song, comedy, bicycle races, and innovation challenges in these three fields respectively. As a holdover from missionary activity, religious events like the annual end of year crossover prayers are observed.

Economic Organization



Lango people are an agrarian society and they reared zebu cattle, goats, sheep, chicken and planted cassava, maize, simsim, *apena* (pigeon peas), *malakwang* etc. In the dry season, they would hunt for game to eat. These farming practices were accompanied with ceremony, *myel kot* (rain dances) for the clouds to open (*tedo kot*, making rain) and streams to burst their banks happened before the planting season and *arum* (consecration of spears) happened towards the dry season's end in preparation for the hunt. These ceremonies were led by the *Won Kot* (rain maker) and *Won Arum* (hunting owner) respectively.

T-B: Simsim, Spear Tips



Lango Calendar of Events

Wangtic (Working Communities)

Wangtic (working communities) were groups of 3 or more lineages concerned with farming the land and would do so in a rotational basis. These were led by a democratically elected leader, *Adwong Wangtic* (work master) whose role was to measure the land to be tilled, allocate tasks, and schedule the day to work. They would work each other's farms with *opilo* (wooden hoes). *Kongo* (beer) was often served as the token of appreciation at the end of the day. These institutions became very useful after the rinderpest epidemic of 1890 that decimated the zebu stock. An old saying, "*cingi ken pe pedo ngunyi*," translating to "your hands alone can not help you," illustrates the importance of this institution. (Okello 2015).



Wangtic, a collection of lineages



L-R: Picking *malakwang* (Driberg, 1923. 81) Zebu bull, *kalo* (millet meal)

The Homestead

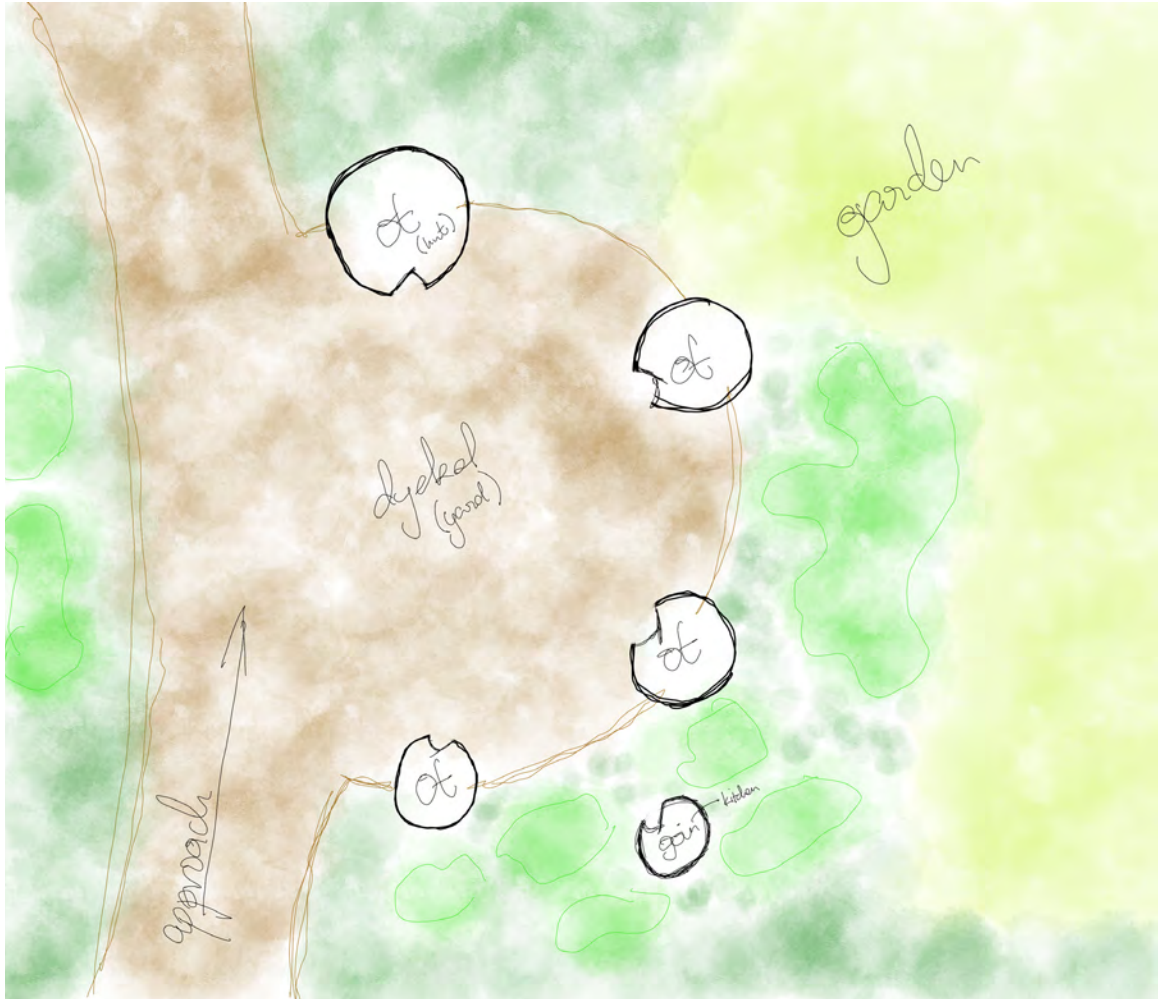
A summary of Driberg's, "The Lango"

As a show of their military prowess and bravery, contrary to other Nilotic tribes, Lango people lived in unfenced villages. Families often built together with the homestead taking on a circular form with the individual units oriented towards the centre of the *dyekal* (yard). Fireplaces are a common feature at their centers. The individual *ot* (hut) has a circular form with a grass thatched conical roof.

The homestead is composed of different huts including *ot* for men, *otogo* for bachelors, *goin* (shed) for cooking, grinding and storage, *ot aguruguru* for guests / men sleeping apart from their wives, *otogo anyira* for unmarried girls, and *dero* (granary). Note that the *ot* and *dero* belong to the wife thus a man must build new ones for each new wife. Huts, however, are dependant on the wife's fertility so she status with her husband until she has children.



Typical homestead (Driberg 1923, 95)



Sketch of a typical homestead plan. Doors of individual units oriented to the center of the yard.

Construction Phases

A man who wants to build a new village consulted *jok* (God) through *ajoka* (medium) who carried out on site tests including placing eggs certain spots on site or throwing them in the bush and after a few days the *ajoka* would be able to assess and about the suitability of the site. Other tests included planting grain on site and monitoring the crops or defecating and looking for dung beetles, an indicator of unhealthy land.

Having been cleared to build on site, the next step is to inquire about use of old thatch in the new village. This thatch is commonly used in the *goin*.

Construction begins with digging circles approximately 3.4m in diameter into which *achipa* (poles) from the *odugo* tree are planted and the porch is shaped. These are secured by *atat* (rafters) from the *akere* tree, applied in concentric rings narrowing to the rooftop, and bound together. Roof pitch is so crucial to the hut's ability to resist weather and hold thatch that there are adjectives for it, *ot awichere* and *ot abak abaka* for a good and bad pitch respectively. Thatching is next and enter the women, charged with the duty of fetching *abi* grass. Thatch is applied in ridges and flounces in a bottom to top approach and finally pat down with an *ago* (a wooden stick with a rectangular base) to finish it. The last phase is wall construction, mud applied to the framework of *achipa* and *atat* up to 100mm thick and left to dry. The cracks are patched up with *opuo* (black earth). In some cases, *opuo* is used for cosmetic finished to the *ot*, giving it a two tone look.

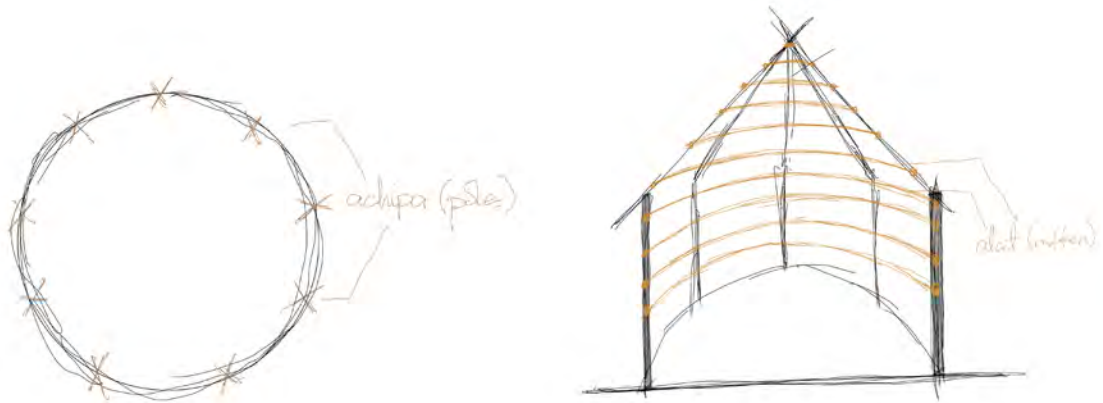


Detail photo of thatch showing layering.

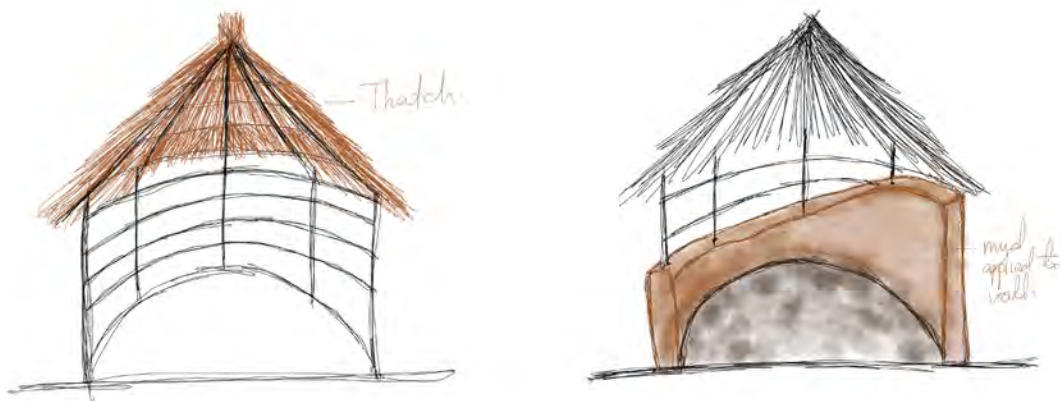


Detail photo of two tone finishing.

Hut Construction Illustrated



L-R: Forming the circle and placing the poles. Adding rafters in concentric circles. The size reduces as they go to the top. Roof elements also added at this step.



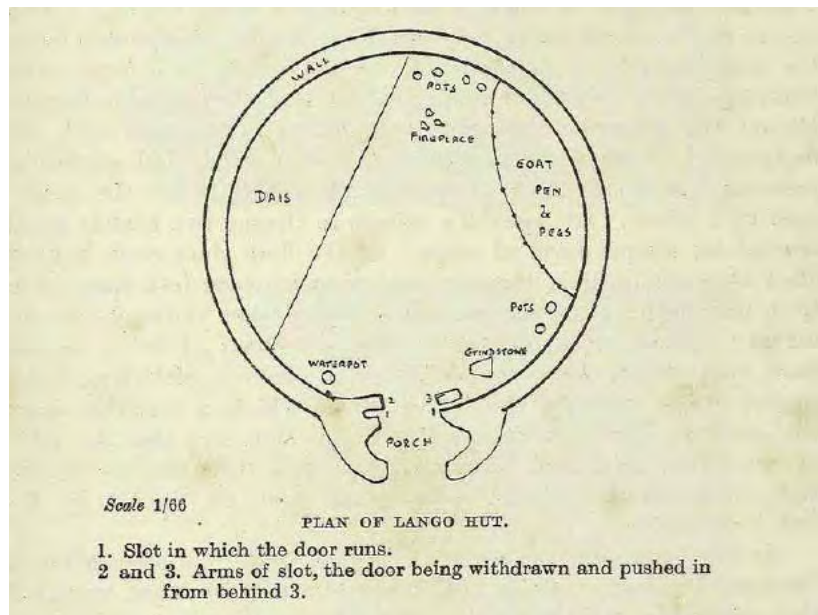
L-R: Thatch added in flounces from the bottom to top. Mud applied to the walls and floor.



L-R: Plaster applied to the wall and cracks sealed with black earth. Finishes applied at this stage as well. Photo of typical hut.

Components

One enters the hut through the *dokika* (doorway) and *gola* (porch) into the main space which has the sleeping area and waterpot to the left opposite the functional spaces. Functional space included pots, a grindstone, cooking stones and a fire. In modern times, the porch has been removed and cooking spaces moved to independent structures



Pre colonial house plan (Driberg 1923, 75)

Special Buildings

Otogo

On reaching puberty, boys built an otogo, raised upto 2m above ground accessed by an *apetan* (log staircase). These had small openings, closed by *achiga* (woven door) through which they would squeeze to enter. These were believed to be raised for security as they made it difficult for the fighting boys to be speared through the roof in their sleep. They were also built small for thermal efficiency, and it's stated that boys would light fires under their huts during the evening meal to warm them up. Presently, these otogo have been lowered to the ground and the form has converged to the ot look.



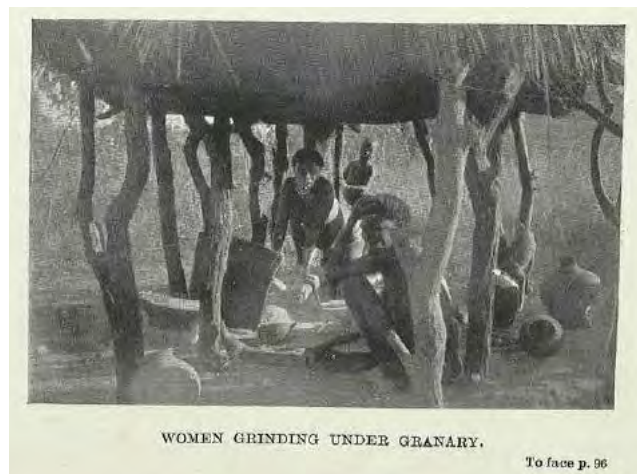
Otogo (Driberg 1923, 77 and` 81)

Dero

The granary was circular, made of wicker work and plastered with cow dung. It had a roof of considerable weight and propped up with an *ayep* (stick) when being accessed. It was raised off the ground to protect from rodents thus had an *achudi* (concave step) to aid access. These were built to store grain and would hold upto 2 tons. Legumes like beans etc were kept in special stores, *tua*, inside the *goin*.



Sketch of a *dero* being held ajar by an *ayep*



Women grinding grain under *dero* (Driberg 1923, 95)

Thesis Statement

Lango culture is endangered owing to its limited study, and reliance on oral traditions, under threat from declining older populations. Preserving and incorporating local knowledge is necessary to provide direction and foundations for the region's future development. The Government (national and municipal), cultural foundation and private entities like Radio Apac have taken initiatives to revive culture through tourism, storytelling, sport, music, dance and drama, and innovation. However, the opportunity to address cultural revitalization through architecture presents itself.

This thesis seeks to explore the role of program and architectural form in merging the storage and learning of *tekwaro* (cultural norms and beliefs) and contemporary knowledge to create a kit of parts that transfer agency to the community to innovate solutions to improve their daily lives while retaining local identity.



Wish Image: *Tekwaro* and contemporary knowledge as co-guides of Apac Municipality

Chapter 3: Design Methodology

Critical Regionalism

Defining Culture

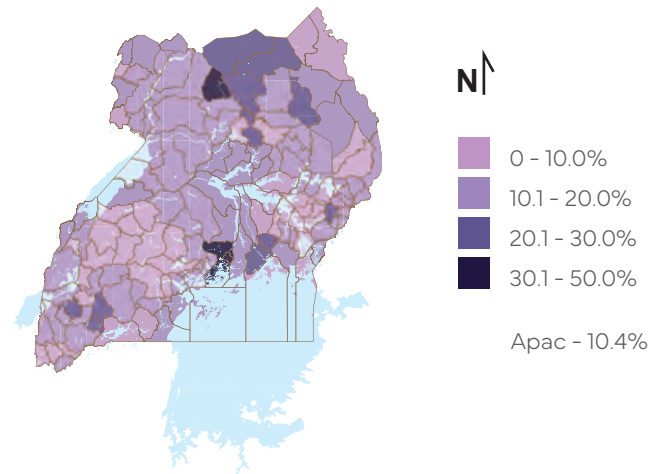
From Appadurai, Culture, can be used to refer to the plethora of differences that characterize the world today, differences at various levels, with various valences, and with greater and lesser degrees of social consequence (Appadurai 1996).

A Global Village

From the arrival of the steamship, the car, the airplane, the camera, the computer, the telephone, and the internet, we have entered an altogether new condition of neighborliness, even with those most distant from ourselves (Appadurai 1996). Today we live in a global village and due to this newfound interconnectedness. With easier access to the rest of the world, cultural exchange has rapidly expanded allowing us to have a world of knowledge and build a global shared culture. However, in Apac, this exchange is largely skewed western because of colonialism in the 19th century and the Lord's Resistance Army rebellion in the early 2000's. This instability disrupted cultural transfer resulting in a knowledge gap quickly filled by western knowledge as it's the current dominant system.

From my experiences in Apac, the fireplace is the first means of knowledge transfer. After dinner with the larger family unit, we would gather round the fireplace where the grand parents would tell stories of their life experiences as well as answer any questions raised by us, the younger family members.

Today, information transfer has gone electronic as more people have access to phones and the internet. In Apac, coverage is still low with only 10.4% of the youth population having internet access (Adriku 2018).



Percentage of youth population (18-30) with access to internet in 2018 (Adriku 2018).

Sifting the World

From Kenneth Frampton, while modernisation has improved the way we live, it has come with costs such as erosion of traditional culture and the genius loci of traditional civilizations, that is, the creative nucleus of society in favour of universal integration. He introduces Critical Regionalism as a method self-consciously seeking to deconstruct universal modernism in terms of values and images which are locally cultivated, and simultaneously blending these indigenous elements with those drawn from foreign sources. In other words, using Lango culture as the filter for the technology based NDPIII (Frampton 1983).

Place and Placemaking

Qualities of Place

Studies agree that the place is concerned with identity and environment (Augé 1995; Norberg-Schulz 1984). Identity is concerned with the history of the area and relationships that are built with the land. On the other hand, environment is concerned with the naturally occurring things like flora, fauna, stone, water, other people as well as man made houses, and streets. It also includes the intangibles such as feelings (Norberg-Schulz 1984). These are then supported by data (numbers, atoms etc.) to serve their purpose.

Place therefore supports everyday life while giving people the ability to simply exist within. Common qualifiers for good places include comfort, frequent human interaction, diversity of users (couples, seniors, single people) and uses, availability of support facilities like transport, food, seating, shade, etc., a higher proportion of women to men, as they are pickier about the places where they can comfortably stay, children and seniors as they can be in the space as others work, and accessibility factored in (Madden 2011).

Another means of assessing place quality is the power of 10 concept. Introduced by Charles and Ray Eames in their film "Power of Ten," it states that when a city lucky to have ten good places, each has at least 10 interesting things to do or see. An example of this is the Discovery Green in downtown Houston. The ten places include places to eat, benches to meet at, play facilities for children, performers' stage, and library.

Psychogeography

Psychogeography examines the interaction between geography and psychology concentrating on how the natural and built environment influences the feelings and attitudes of individuals (Ilkay 2023, 585). Psychogeography can explain the features of place discussed in the previous sub chapter. The power of ten concept and the qualifiers of place discussed above aim to provide spaces that feel welcoming and encourage people to stay.

As a Roman, you could not ramble on the city. The massive buildings would command you to adopt yourself to the city. ...The geometry of Roman city disciplines the movements of the body and in the sense gives the order of 'Look and obey' (Ilkay 2023, 590).

Material and pattern of space play a huge role in shaping the positioning of body and the disciplinary role of the space. From the roman example, the use of stone construction grid pattern gives people the need to conform to place. Applied to Apac, the study involves overlapping the Lynch's elements of the city (paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks) with Seamon's processes of attachment to place and creates six goals for my intervention.

- Place interaction. To provide opportunities for spontaneous contact.
- Place identity. Acknowledgement of the importance of site to the community
- Place release. Opportunities to stop and chat.
- Place realization. Creating the soul and form of the site
- Place creation. Involving the public in the creation and evolution of place.
- Place intensification. Sustaining the life of the site through design and use.

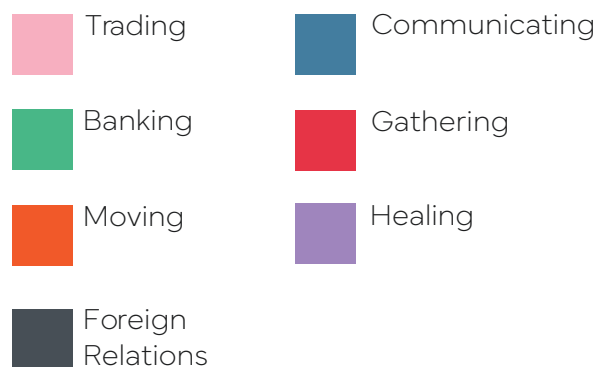
Chapter 4: Process

Mapping the Municipality

In mapping Apac Municipality, I started by identifying key human institutions that are present today. These include communication, banking, moving, trading, gathering, and healing. In addition, I collected local planning maps to learn about the zoning blocks around the upper center site. This is necessary as upper center is to be developed and this would give an idea on the type of development to be expected.

From here, I located buildings and places that relate to the above-mentioned institutions. Finally, I compared the building form and institution type to gain a sense of which forms were preferred for each institution.

Life in the Municipality



Legend: Human institutions in Apac Municipality



Human institutions in Apac Municipality. An account of the day-to-day life within the municipality

Attending Events

Adacara, 2023

Adacara 2023 was live streamed, and this enabled me to experience the festivities albeit remotely and get the gist of the ceremony. From the stream, sport through the cycling race and dance were key highlights and popular events. Other performances included stand-up comedy. In addition, reports were written documenting the innovation challenges within the Adacara event, and I intend to study these to learn about the supports necessary for appropriate incorporation of technology within cultural revival discourse.



L-R: Main Stage assembly



L-R: *Okeme* (Thumb Piano) and Dance Practice



L-R: Cycling Race, Stand-up Comedy and Omweeso Prize Giving

Visiting Apac

Clan Meetings



Clan Meeting, Dec. 2023

Traditionally held in the compound of the *awitong* (clan chief), under a large opobo tree. They are held to discuss the state of the clan as well as project a path for the future development of the clan. While on holiday, I was able to attend a meeting for the okwero ngeć ayita clan where the need for collection of the clan's history was a key point. This was in line with the larger cultural revival efforts and represents the needs finding portion of the research process.

Site Analysis

From the visits, I analysed weather, sun, topography etc. I'll also be observing building type in relation to its function. From early studies, the commercial and administrative buildings lean closer to western practice with local form a reserve for residential architecture. This will be followed by testing through concept development and it's refining regarding the possible outcomes and presentation and feedback from the community and then exhibition is presentation of the project itself at the end.

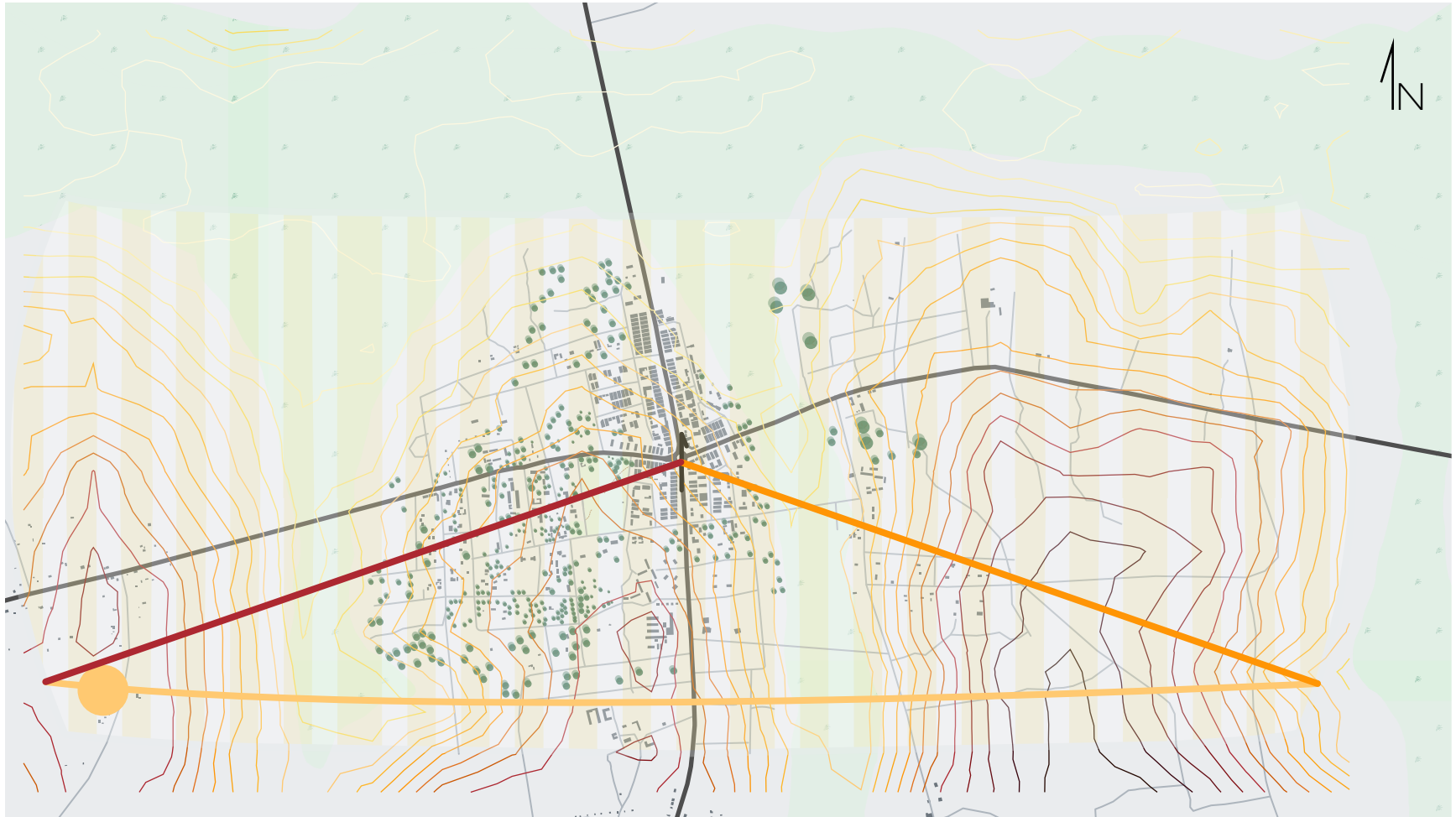
While in Apac, dawn to mid morning and the evenings were the most active parts of the day as 11am to 3pm was the hottest part of the day thus people would retreat to the shade.

Thesis Site

The thesis site is located at Boma grounds, the hub of Apac municipality. It is the bridge that connects the government on the west face to the central business district to its east. It regularly hosts large events like Adacara and football games in addition to the end of year crossover services giving it cultural relevance. These events have the effect of mixing people from various walks of life therefore creating new connections.

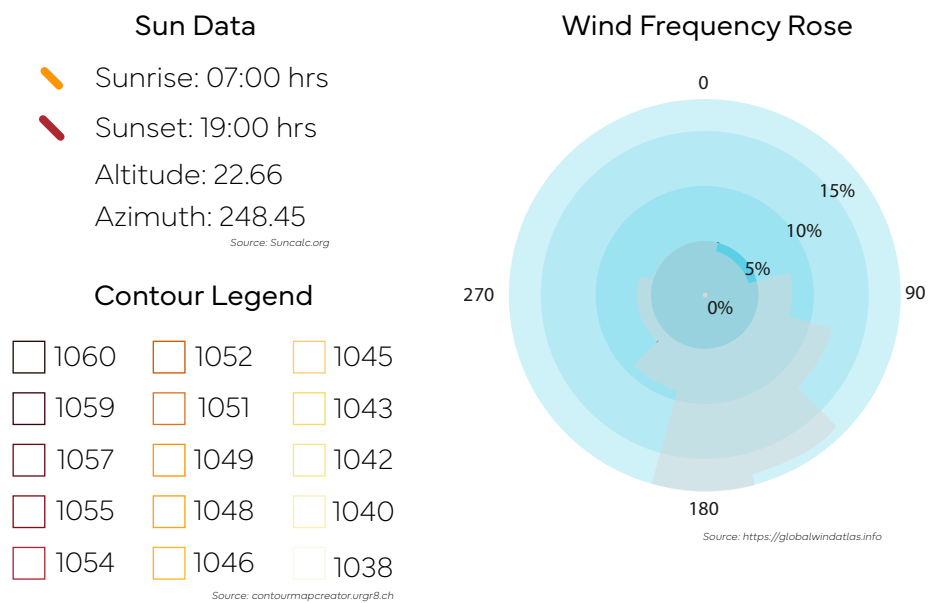
Boma Grounds presents an opportunity to complete the urban wall around the park and activate the space by providing a support pavilion to the events that happen there. In addition, education layers can be added with the learning, testing/ maker spaces and exhibition facilities available. However, in contrast to the aforementioned games and events, learning creates a year round interaction with the park.

Finally, the use of familiarity in construction materials and methods is to continue the cultural renaissance conversation, and advocate for representation of Lango culture in design.

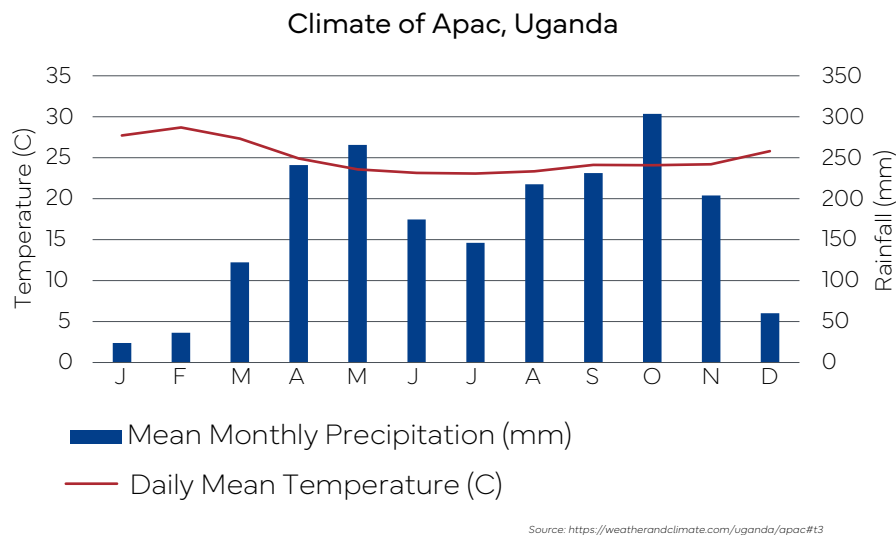


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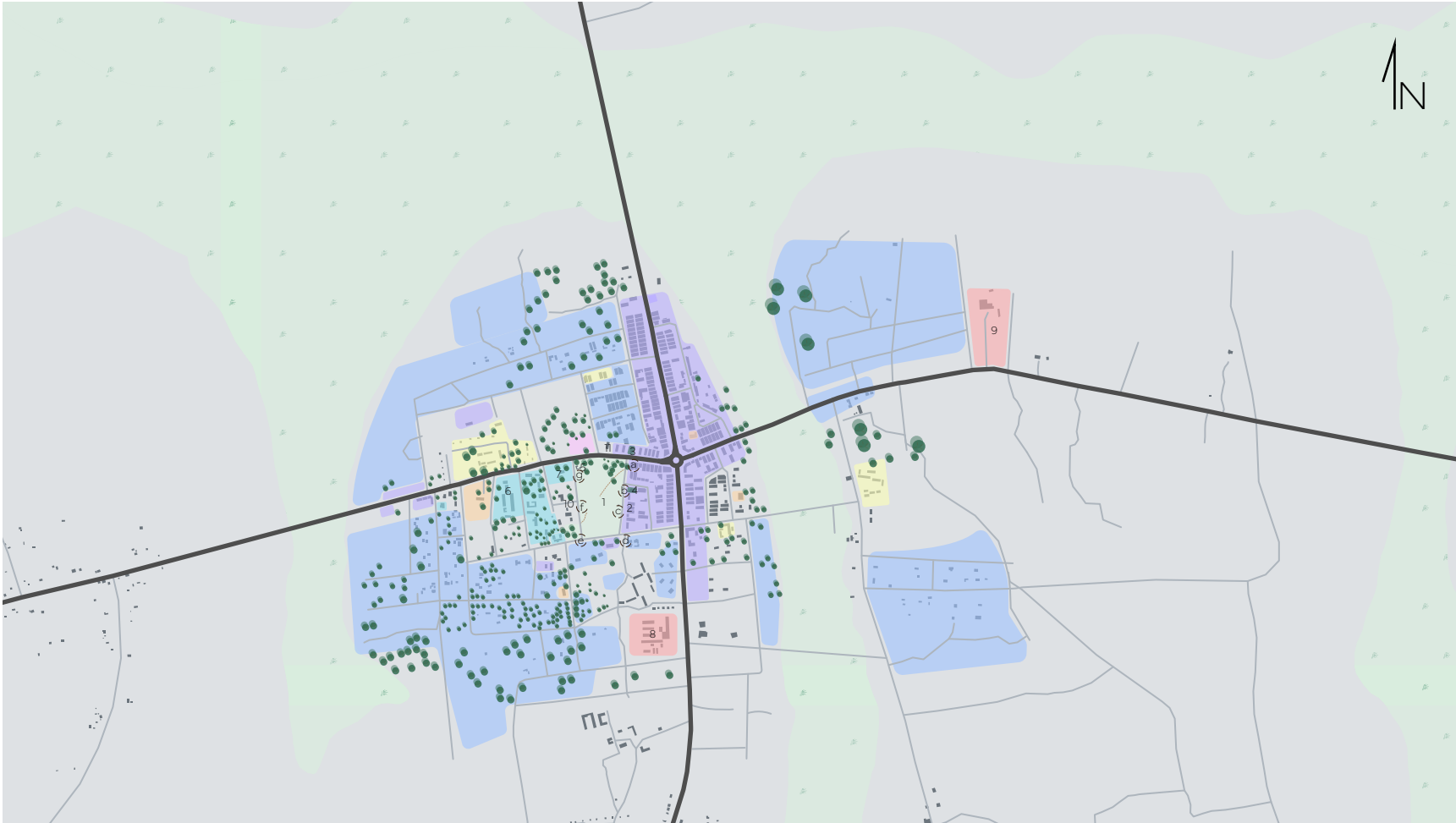
Preliminary Site Analysis, Physical Features.



Sun Data, Wind Frequency, and Contour Legend of Apac, Uganda (Suncalc n.d.; Davis et al 2023; Contour Map Creator n.d.).











Climate graph of Apac, Uganda (Weather and Climate 2024).



1:24,000

Preliminary Site Analysis. Man Made Features explained

Human Institutions

 Governance	 Learning
 Healing	 Banking
 Trading	 Praying
 Resting	 Farming

Key Places

1. Boma Grounds
2. Radio Apac
3. Stanbic Bank
4. Centenary Bank
5. National Water
6. District HQ
7. Municipal HQ
8. Apac General Hospital
9. Nightingale Hospital
10. Apac Disabled Persons Union (ADIPU)
11. Apac Police Station

Man Made Features Legend

Views around the Park



Group A. L-R: Facing Apac-Lira highway (ALH), Corner of Biashara Road and Apac-Kole-Lira Highway, Stanbic Bank



Group B: Centenary Bank opposite Boma Grounds



Group C. L-R: Radio Apac opposite Boma grounds, road works on Biashara Road

Design Goals

As a major public development within the area, the cultural space uses form to restore the significance of Lango culture and celebrate local identity. As a counter to the Municipal headquarters mentioned above, the form is inspired by the Opobo, the traditional gathering place. Okeme (thumb piano) keys inspire slats for light control.

Being the central part of the municipality, the porosity between the hub, park and the environs intends to have an upbeat energy and invite people to see what's happening and inspire interaction with the site and other users. The ground level is about creating spontaneous contact, opportunities to recharge and the first point of contact with cultural education and exhibition.

After dinners, we'd gather around the fireplace where the grandparents would tell life stories, origins of our names and the like. This practice inspires the need to create intimate spaces for learning and reflection.

Central to my thesis is education of both Lango history and Science, Tech, and Innovation in line with national objectives. Boma Ground represents the hearth of the municipality and springboard for future growth of Apac municipality. With plans for mixed use residential and commercial spaces within the area, this is an ideal location for placing the hub of Lango culture within the municipality.

As a sequel to learning, maker spaces provide support for users creativity and education. Some of the supports to the space include mobile money for financial proofing, internet access, solar power generated on the roofs, and access to the site through bus and taxi parks and the new Apac-Kole-

Lira highway. These spaces adapt the cultural institution of wangtic, to present context using apprenticeship as the driving theme. This adds an innovative layer to the Boma ground and creating new relevance by providing innovations for the business district to react to.

After the design process, I anticipate the spaces to be used to learn about Lango culture and personalities relevant to her history. The cultural center is designed to compliment Adacara and other once-a-year festivals by providing a home for these showcases through the year, keeping discussion around cultural revival relevant.



Group D: Driving along the south edge of Boma grounds



Group E: Bush to the South West corner of the grounds.



Group F: Driving along the west edge of the park



Group G: National Water offices located at the north west corner of the park

Chapter 5: Design Proposal

The design proposal focuses on a hub and satellite approach to achieve the design goals mentioned in chapter 4.

Defining the Park

In the park, the northeast corner, where Biashara Road and the Apac-Kungu-Lira Highway (ALH) meet, is a popular rest area for people because of the shade trees, and proximity to food, stands, offices and shops. There are footpaths that run from northeast to southwest created by people over time as Boma Grounds connects the residential areas to downtown.



Trees at the corner of Biashara Road and ALH.

Football games and large events are in the middle of the park and the smaller events like crusades happen in the northwest corner, closer to national water's Apac office.



One of the footpaths' start location in the park. Plastic bags indicate frequent use of the location.

By placing buildings on the northern and southern edges I aim to define the park boundaries. on the eastern and western edges, I propose tree planting to define the edge. In the homestead, trees define the borders instead of fences. These defined the homestead but also allowed easy access as the border is perforated. Similarly, tree planting defines the park in this way. In addition, it further enhances the visitor experience by creating more shade places with Olam, Acacia and Olam trees and by adding Mango and Orange trees we add a food element to the park, retaining people in the space.



Site Section (1:2000) highlighting the zones in the park.



Site Plan (1:2000)

Opobo (The Great Tree)

Introduction and Inspiration

This is the main element of the park and serves as the main public presence on the park. It is situated on the south edge of the park to preserve the paths through the park as well as maintain the dynamic nature of the park's center.

Trees are central to Lango culture, they are commonly used as meeting places. In the context of clan meetings, the clan chief would sit at the base of the trunk, with the cabinet close by and the public further back under the canopy.

Translating this to the built environment, creates three zones, the private, semi public and public. These zones are defined by occupancy with private and public having the smallest and largest occupancy respectively. Secondly, there's an arrangement aspect to the rooms in the buildings. At the center, large, heavy rooms represent tree trunks. These are taller and made with rammed earth. Surrounding them, on the first floor, there are smaller rooms with perforated walls to represent lightness, similar to the tree canopy. On the ground floor, there are lounging and relief areas, in the shadow of the first floor that cantilevers out like tree branches.



The tree is the basic meeting place within Apac.



Translating the tree to the built form.

Under the Canopy

On approach from the park, one is met by the ground floor canopy free of built space save for the auditorium and art gallery, the primary exhibition spaces on the east and west wings respectively. The ground level also features bleachers and lounging pods that allow people to refresh themselves, take refuge in the shade privately or look on to the park, especially during games.



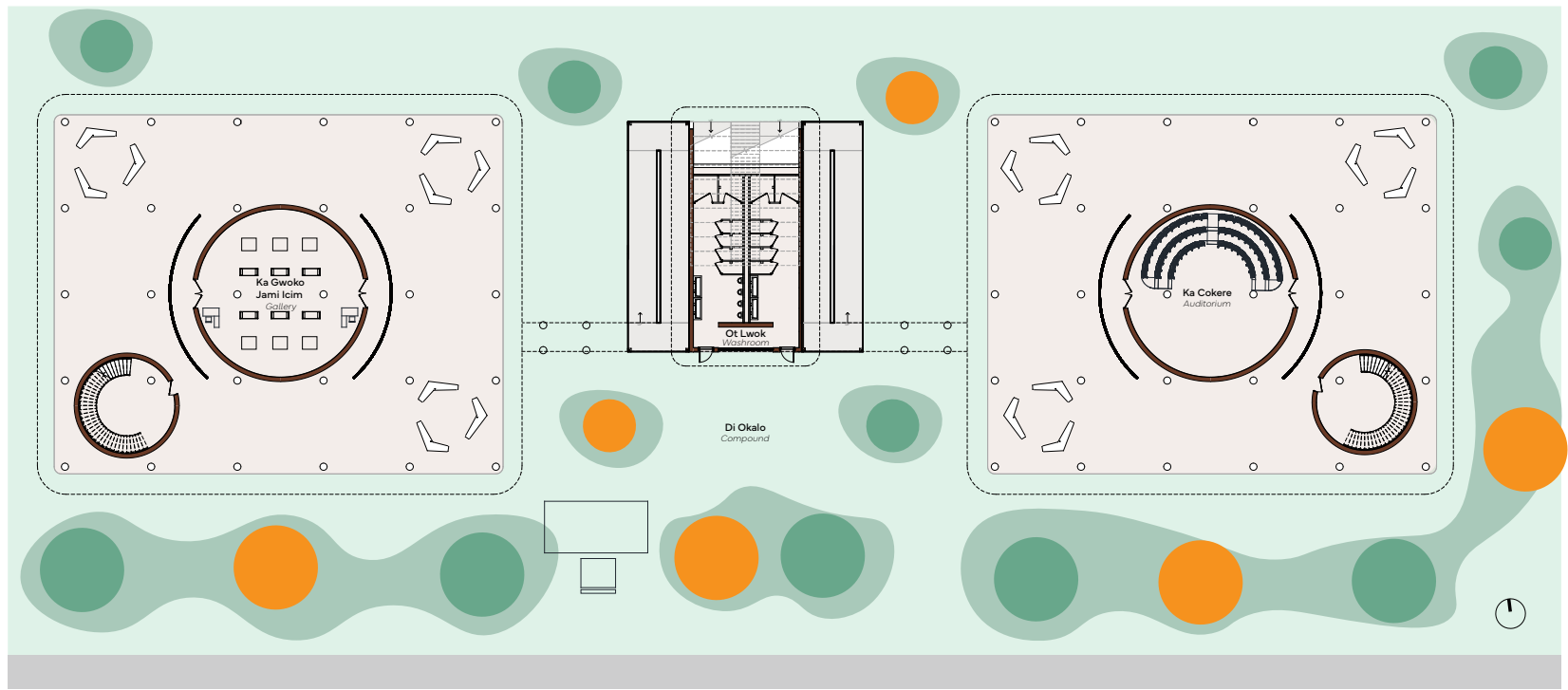
Top and Bottom: Opobo North and South approaches. In the northern approach, the stair bleachers are visible

Porosity is the key to this level and so save for the tree trunks (gallery and auditorium) the floor only contains lounging areas, an invitation for people to pass through and possibly stop and wander like one would when moving through a forest.

This forest canopy is further accentuated by the trees that will line up the spaces between the wings and encircling the park, with perforations for entry and exit of the parks with respect to the paths made by the people. These would be a



Wood Columns like wandering through a forest



Ground Floor Plan (1:500)

mix of orange, mango and et cetera, a combination of food and shading from the afternoon sun.

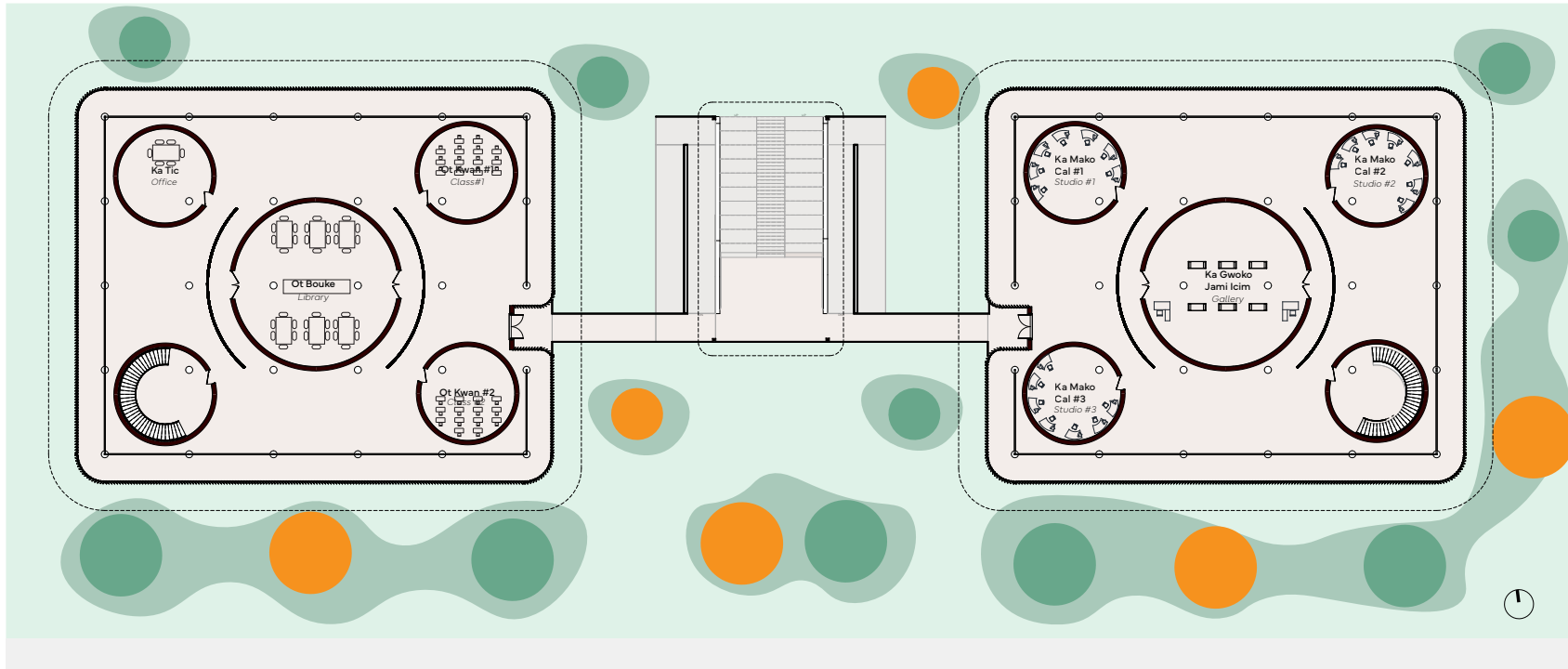
The first floor covers the learning and testing components with libraries, maker spaces and recording studios. These smaller spaces are oriented towards the larger circular



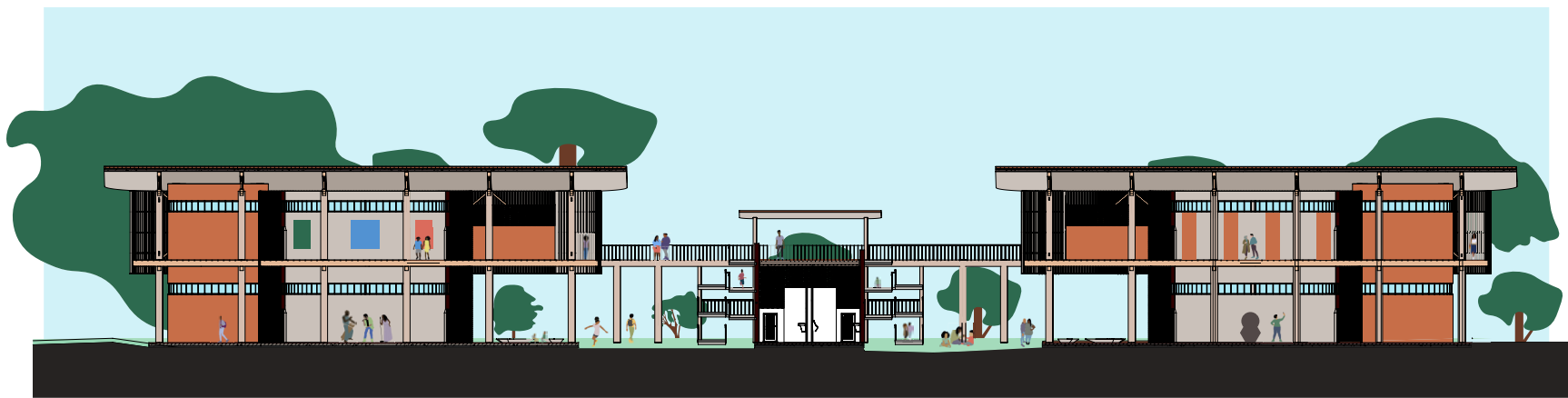
Typical classroom. Focus on STEM learning in line with national objectives



Wandering through the spaces. Local art featured on the walls.

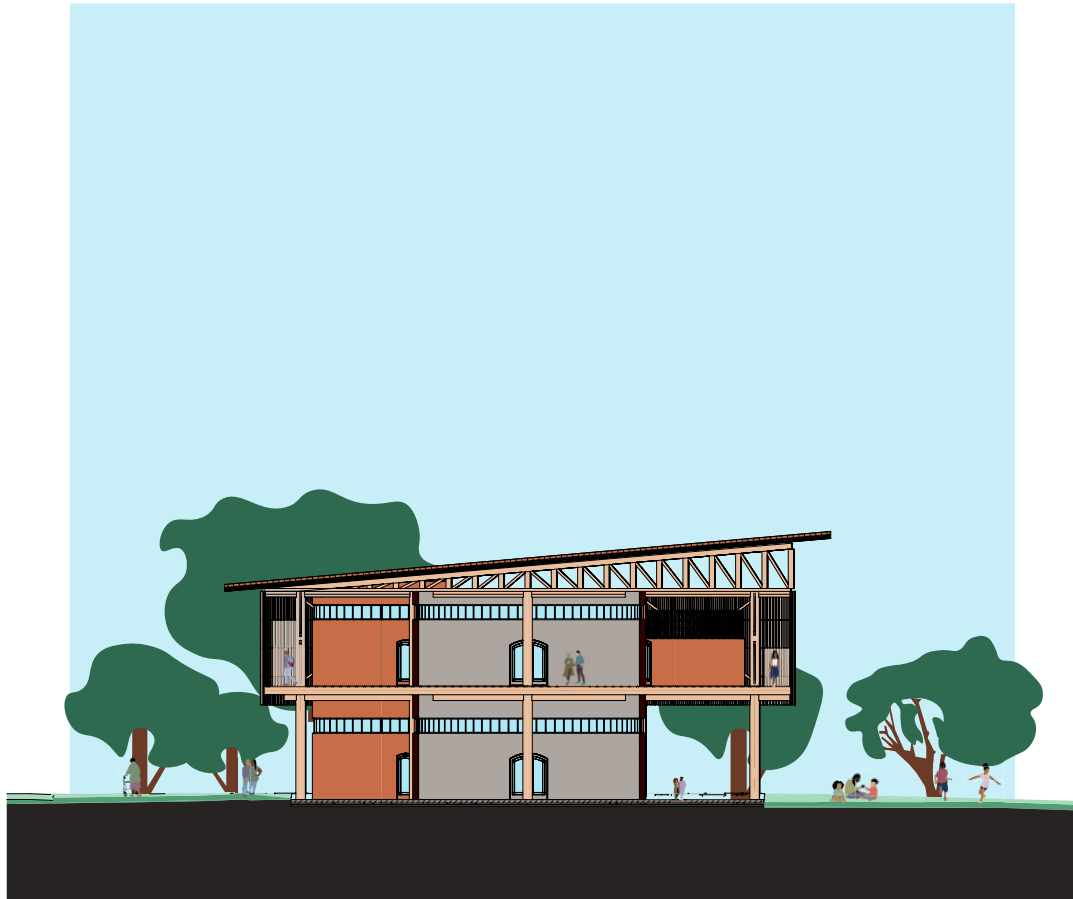


First Floor Plan (1:500)

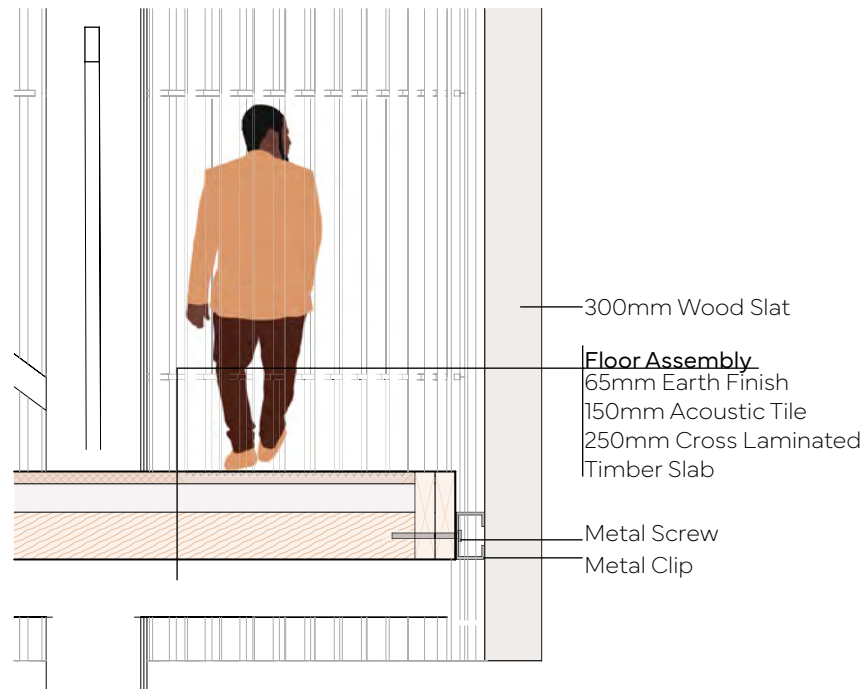


East West Opobo inhabited section (1:500)

rooms akin to the relationship between the individual huts and the yard in the lango homestead.



North-South section through Opobo (1:400). Lightness represented by the wood, perforated bricks and light roof. The building resembles trees by having the first floor cantilever over the ground floor

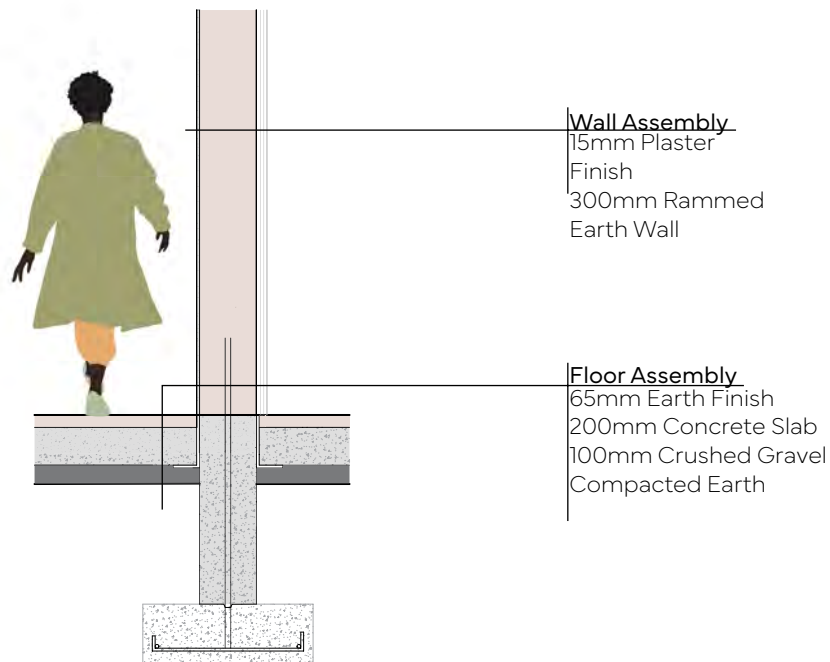


Wood slat attachment detail (1:40). Wood slats emphasize lightness, a feature of tree canopies.



Wood Slat Facade

Lightness is central to the first floor as it represents the leaves of the tree and this is shown by the shorter wall heights and use of perforated bricks in the class and studio spaces. In addition, wood slats feature here as the building envelope. Rammed earth construction is a modern take on the mud, post and rafter construction used in the construction of the traditional hut and employs skills similar to its construction. Texturally, it feels similar to the finish employed on the traditional hut and so radiates a homely, approachable feel to the building.



Floor connection detail (1:40). Rammed earth emphasizes heaviness, a feature of tree trunks.

Adungu (Bow Harp)

A satellite to the great tree, the adungu is the machine to the hub's art. It consists of a recharge station, observation deck as well as communication tower to provide the internet access, needed for the functioning of the spaces in the hub.

The satellite is oriented on the north edge of the park in the performances zone, and acts to complete the square as well as usher people into the park. The recharge station provides more spaces for spontaneous encounters, increasing the fondness of the users towards the park as it normalizes simply existing in space. In addition, it supports the smaller events by providing space for outdoor concerts to happen.



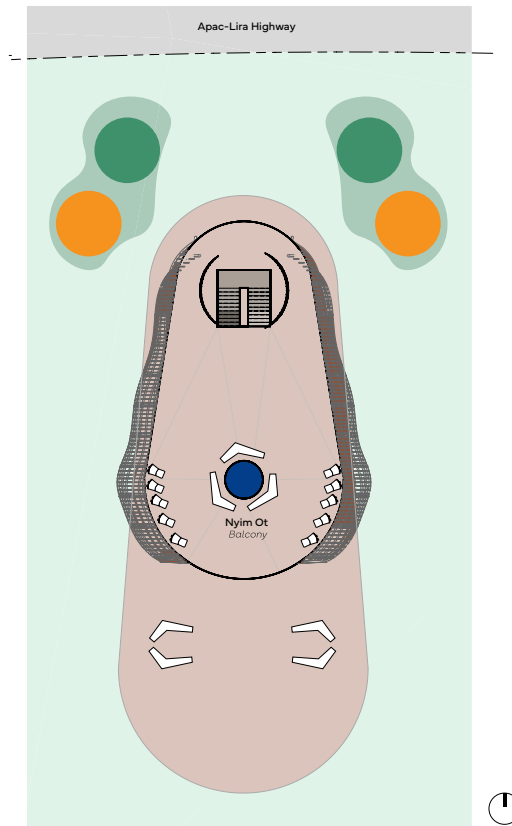
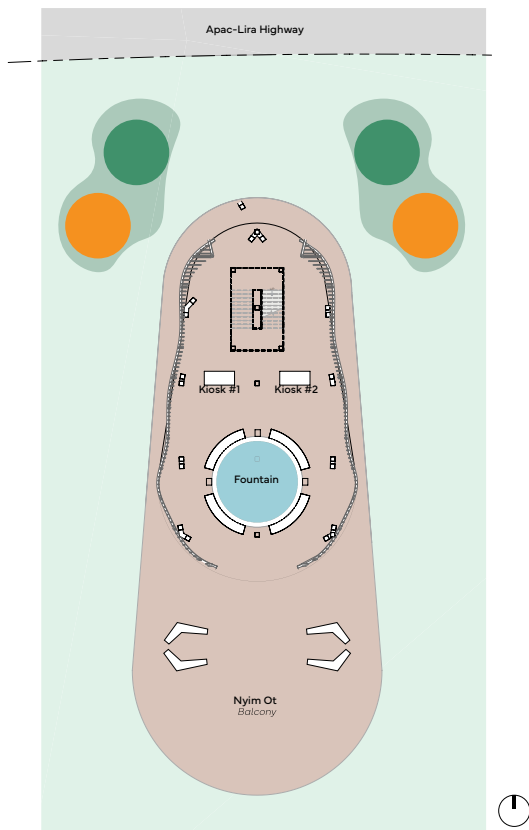
Outdoor performing space. Unlike the larger performances, this would be a permanent proposal, allowing people to use it regularly.



Adungu Approach. Water catchment net represented in gray.

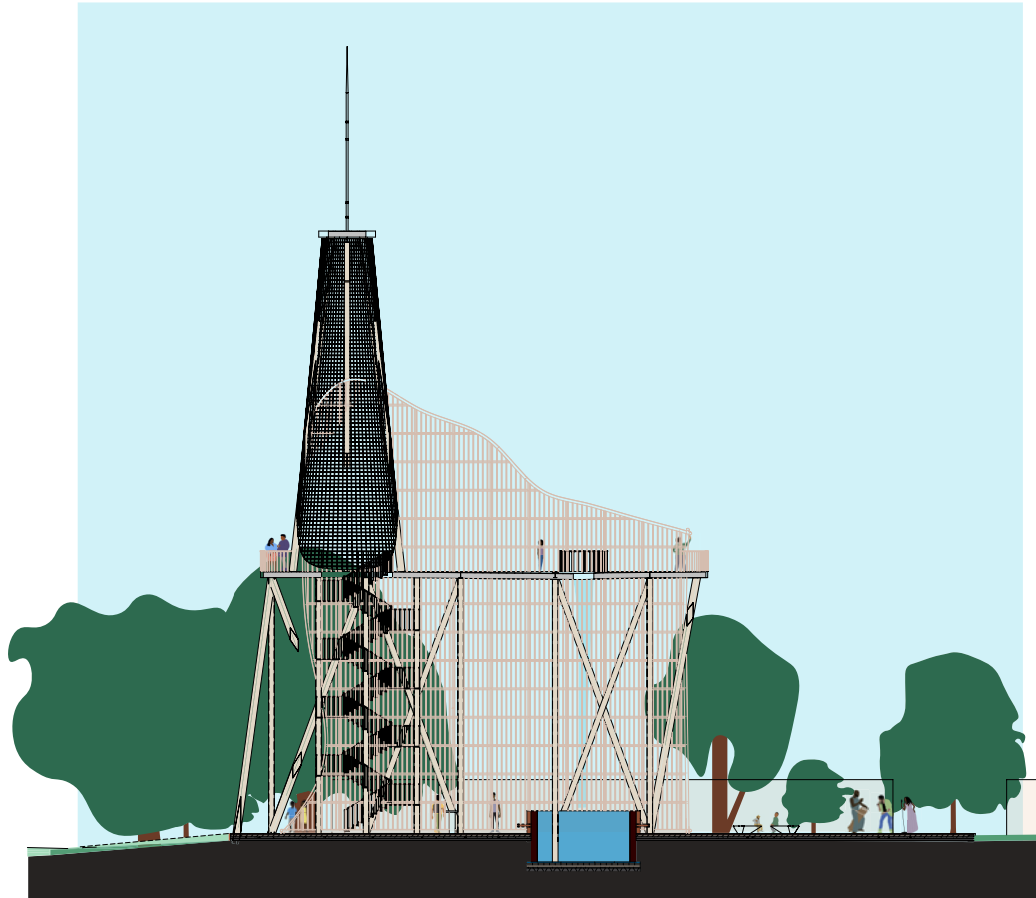


Adungu Observation Deck.



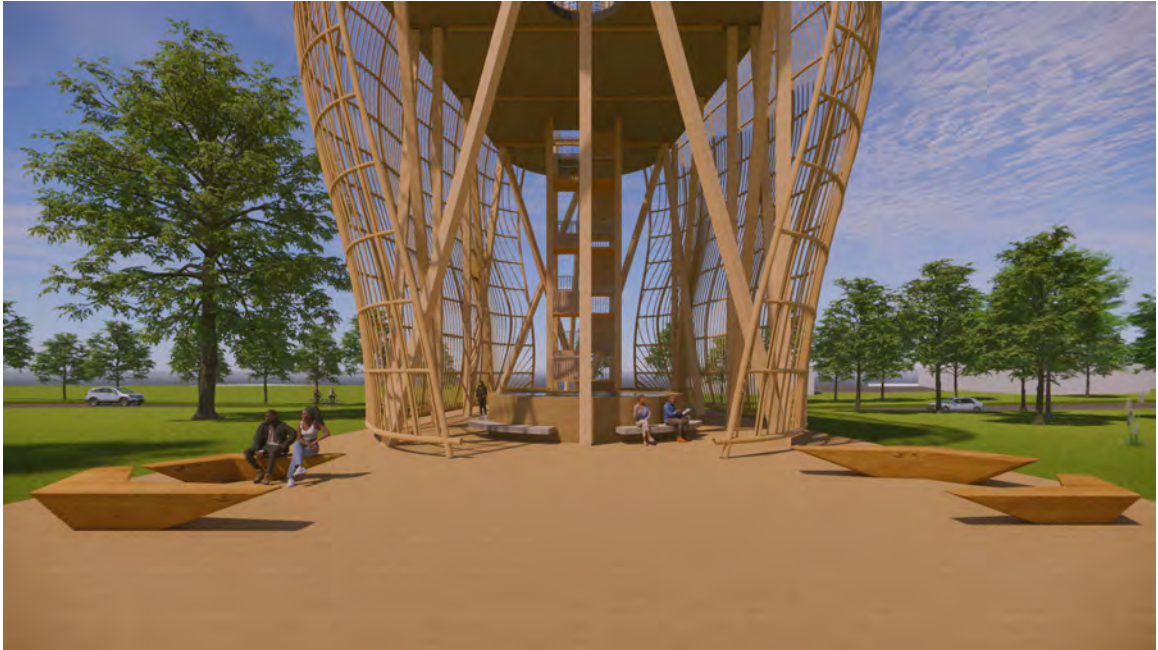
Adungu ground and first floor plans. (1:500)

The observation deck provides views of the municipality and to the park, watching people use the spaces and the functioning of the water catchment system. This water catchment is inspired by the work done by warka project in Ethiopia.

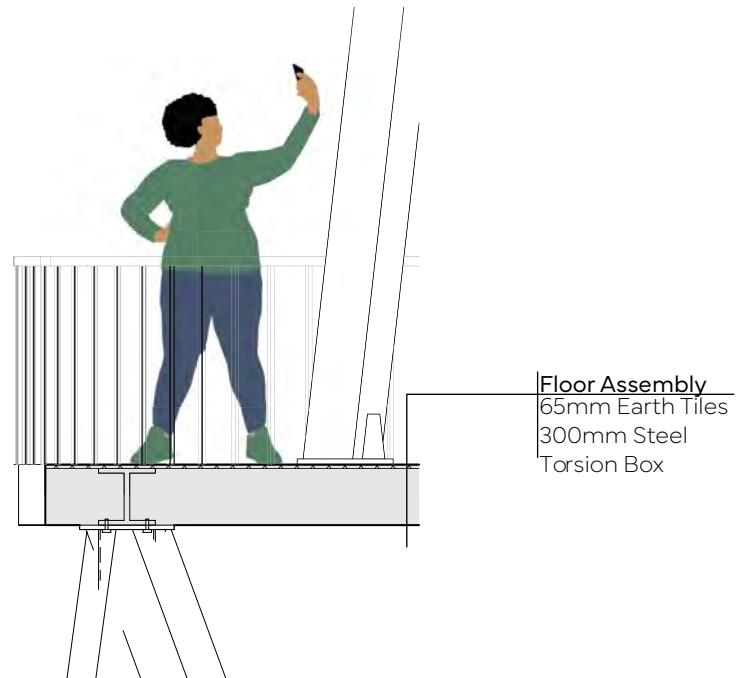


North-South section through Adungu (1:400)

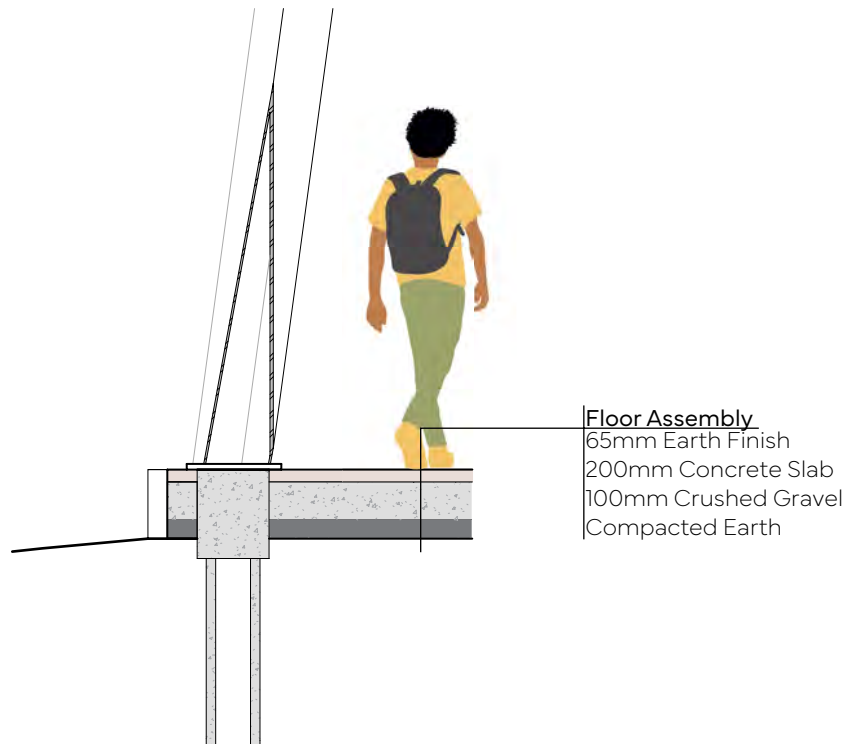
Lightness is the driving factor with this operation and the observatory uses a bamboo facade to compliment the steel construction to that effect.



Bamboo facade and steel construction. Steel elements painted to match the wood to match the “trees in the path” theme.



Observation Deck detail (1:40)



Adungu Floor detail (1:40)

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The thesis began as a means to learn about and reconnect with my culture given that I live away from Apac. However, during my research, I learned that there's a general drive to restore the significance of Lango culture.

From remarks of cultural leaders and members in government to private entities like Radio Apac, art, dance and storytelling are the consensus drivers of this re-education. The built environment provides a way to compliment these efforts as well as providing a permanence to the arts by housing them. This is important because one of the shortfalls of education, especially coming from the outside is a lack of infrastructure to continue the conversation. Infrastructure is a major achilles heel and part of this is because of cost. By using local materials and techniques, we make building more efficient as well as show people that building of the community can be mainstream.

It also challenges the notion that as we modernise, we shift western, save for those who cannot afford to and the ultra-exclusive expensive tourist spaces. The buildings being a direct counter to the new construction planned in the municipality. Specifically the new Centerary Bank building and the Municipality Headquarters. these buildings while large in scale, are lost in the sense that they do not fit the street language. Apac is a blank slate and this gives us the opportunity to build for the community, of the community. This makes turns the users of the buildings into stewards as they have a sense of belonging to the buildings.

Ultimately, the goal of this thesis is to provide a kit of parts that gives the community the agency to come up with creative ways to enhance their everyday life while keeping their unique local identity.

The next steps for this include sharing my research with local officials within the community to show interest in contributing to Lango cultural revival discourse and to assess the viability of the spaces I am proposing in preparation for further design development.

For Apac specifically, as the country opens up to it with new highway development, there is an opportunity to place itself on the map as the cultural capital of Lango subregion and draw level with Lira, the subregion's economic heart.

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