

# conservation, creativity and communication

workshop for students of the program  
**architecture and urban planning**  
in ethiopian institute of technology  
faculty of architecture and urban planning in mekelle  
object:

## WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

to: DR. GEBREMESKEL KAHSAY,  
Scientific Director of EiTM

Dear Mekelle University, dear Ato Dr. Gebremeskel Kahsay

I would like to follow up the cooperation that our structure has successfully made with your faculty of architecture during last 2 years.

One of the goals of unlimitedJCA is to support architectural education and urban public space through various workshops and trainings realized with architects and government (Burkina Faso) and universities (Ethiopia). We have successfully finished several workshops and we would like to establish long-term cooperation with the Mekelle University.

The first contact dates the year 2013. The intention was to diversify inputs for the architectural research led in cooperation with an NGO called People in Need, but after initial discussions we have decided to cooperate directly on academic level.

- 2013\_06 initial contact about research cooperation
- 2013\_09 3month long research in situ
- 2013\_10 2month long workshop "Think globally, act locally!" in Mekelle University
- 2014\_02 booklet "SCHOOL design INNOVATIONS", the workshop report included in chapter "Fresh Ideas"
- 2014\_05 block workshop "Find It and Use It" about public space in condominiums
- 2014\_11 product design workshop "Condominium Street Fu(rni)ture" at the occasion of the International Conference "The Affordable and the Profitable" in Mekelle
- 2015\_01 candidature for the grant of the Czech embassy in Addis Abeba to organise workshop build the condo fu(rni)ture – refused

I would be happy to continue the discussion about opportunities of cooperation with EiT-M, about the involvement of your students and staff and enlarging the impact of the workshops. I am sending you the newest proposal of a workshop that meets the curricula of the Faculty of Architecture in a course called Arch6103 – Restoration and Preservation for 6th year students. The workshop aims to set the study frame of accessibility and preservation of public property of cultural heritage.

As it is good habitude of unlimitedJCA, the tutor with international experience is at your disposal for free, but we are searching for the sustainable balance and asking you kindly to cover the travel costs. Luckily, the travel is within Africa (from Burkina Faso).

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely with best regards

Michaela Solnická, Ing. arch.  
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## CONTEXTE OF THE WORKSHOP “CONSERVATION, CREATIVITY AND COMMUNICATION”

In today's interconnected world, the local identity and cultural heritage is the key aspect of the community confidence and social development. People may benefit on daily basis from historic monuments and preserved traditional practices. The UNESCO itself claims that heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability. Creativity contributes to building open, inclusive and pluralistic societies. Both heritage and creativity lay the foundations for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies.

The world is convinced that no development can be sustainable without a strong culture component. Indeed only a human-centered approach to development based on mutual respect and open dialogue among cultures can lead to lasting, inclusive and equitable results. Yet until recently, culture has been missing from the development equation, the UNESCO admits as well.

The losses caused to heritage at times of crisis, can deprive a community of its memory, the physical testimony to its past, but also of a precious resource for social and economic wellbeing. UNESCO seeks to integrate the power of heritage as a positive and unifying force that can help prevent conflicts and facilitate peace-building, recovery and reconciliation.

The history of modern Ethiopia shows that for a long period the Tigray region suffered from the political crises in the territory - the current tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea followed after 30-year long Eritrean struggle for its independence and Red Terror of Derg, the violent political campaign. The political instability led into environmental and economic deprivation. The culture and heritage was evidently displaced from the attention of suffering people.

Today, Tigray is one of the most strategic regions in the development scheme of the country – many companies have been founded here, the infrastructure has been improved and the public interest turned into the region. This attention is oriented to all features, the history and heritage included. The potential is rich. It is about to be employed.

The concerned intervention into sites might develop the accessibility and availability of the culture and promote the cultural background of the society. The sites declared as cultural heritage cause extensive discussions regarding “conservation” and “patrimony”. There is perpetuating European pattern of conservation, but is it the way how to preserve local Ethiopian sites that are so numerous in northern Tigray? Is the emphasizing the preservation of buildings without considering the social context the right way?

In proposed workshop “Conservation, Creativity and Communication”, already fourth experience of cooperation between Mekelle University and Jakub Cigler Architekti, a.s., we want to discuss the implications of all formal and informal ideas and stakeholders in a cultural intervention.

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## AIM:

to support creativity, innovation and the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors, to transform the potential into something more vital and radical in a decent and appropriate way, to question the roles of actors and to review its distribution, to evaluate the accessibility and availability of the heritage  
to find ways how to perceive, feel, understand and deal with cultural wealth and people's needs, how to activate remoted areas, hidden spots, how to turn them into the places overflowing with uniqueness and INSPIRATION, how to attract the people to care about it, how to think progressively and SUSTAINABLY, how to contribute to the DEVELOPMENT, how to respond to the aspiration of tourists...

## SUB-THEMES:

how to use local, primary and secondary materials - how to recycle, how to make the users feel the ownership of the site, architecture as a contribution to the development, regional REGENERATION, finding focal points of public attention, phenomena and archetypes, presentation techniques...

## ACADEMIC FRAME:

The workshop is demand-driven project based on identification of needs of the faculty. It is a complement of the course **Arch 6103 - Restoration & Preservation** in the Program B.Sc. in Architecture

Course Objectives & Competences to be Acquired: The course aims to introduce students to the field of historic preservation, specifically focusing upon the areas of preservation and restoration of historic buildings. Through classroom instruction and laboratory experience, students gain relevant knowledge and skill in the use of theory, practice and applied learning to solve preservation issues and problems.

Course Description: conservation, sustainability, treatment of historic structures, historic documentation and research, history of building materials, discussion and case study development to explore political, social/historical, and economic and **design/restoration issues of preservation and adaptive use of buildings.**

The workshop is an intensive and playful approach to explore the issue of the cultural heritage and contemporary interventions, to explore how architectural tools can be used to shape public interest.

The workshop itself will be considered like a block course in the beginning of the spring semester as a major workload of the course "Arch 6103 - Course Restoration & Preservation" of the winter semester of the academic year 2015/2016. It will be part of their mandatory curricula for all students of 6th year of bachelor program.

The workshop might be organized in the cooperation with the Institute of Heritage Conservation (especially the following expertise - methods and practices of assessment, methods and practices of preserving and conservation of heritage sites, low-tech & high-tech and new technology in heritage, micro and macro climatic conditions).



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## CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY OF INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

In many cases it can be hard to motivate students to develop their skills, to study. Students are not uninterested; they only need different ideas and methods to get inspired. That's why we develop the concept of "Frontal and interactive workshop" - Frontal workshop in the morning to introduce the core issue of the workshop, briefing activities, the state of the art and possible alternatives. - Interactive workshop in the afternoon to design possible proposals, support networking and systemic innovation relating to the project objectives. The studying during special excursions is incorporated into the program via the field trip to the site.

## BENEFICIERS:

As the aim of the workshop is to design a solution for **real** site, the project will have real users. The aim is to present the results in front of a governmental body responsible for the heritage in the region.

The workshop itself contemplates a profit of the team: active participants (students) – coordinators (faculty staff) – spectators (public). The capacity building of the local staff and administration will be undertaken through the coordination process of the workshop to transfer appropriate skills to be able to continue with similar actions.

## NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

approx. 60 students from the last (6th) year of study in winter semester. They will participate on mandatory basis in the workshop session as in the part of their block course Arch 6103 - Course Restoration & Preservation of the winter semester of the academic year 2015/2016. Each student is rewarded with a professional certificat in accordance with his engagement.

## LITTERATURE:

Dr. Abba Teweldemedhin Yosief: The Monolithic Churches of Tigray

Claude Lepage and Jacques Mercier: The Ancient Churches of Tigray

## RESULTS:

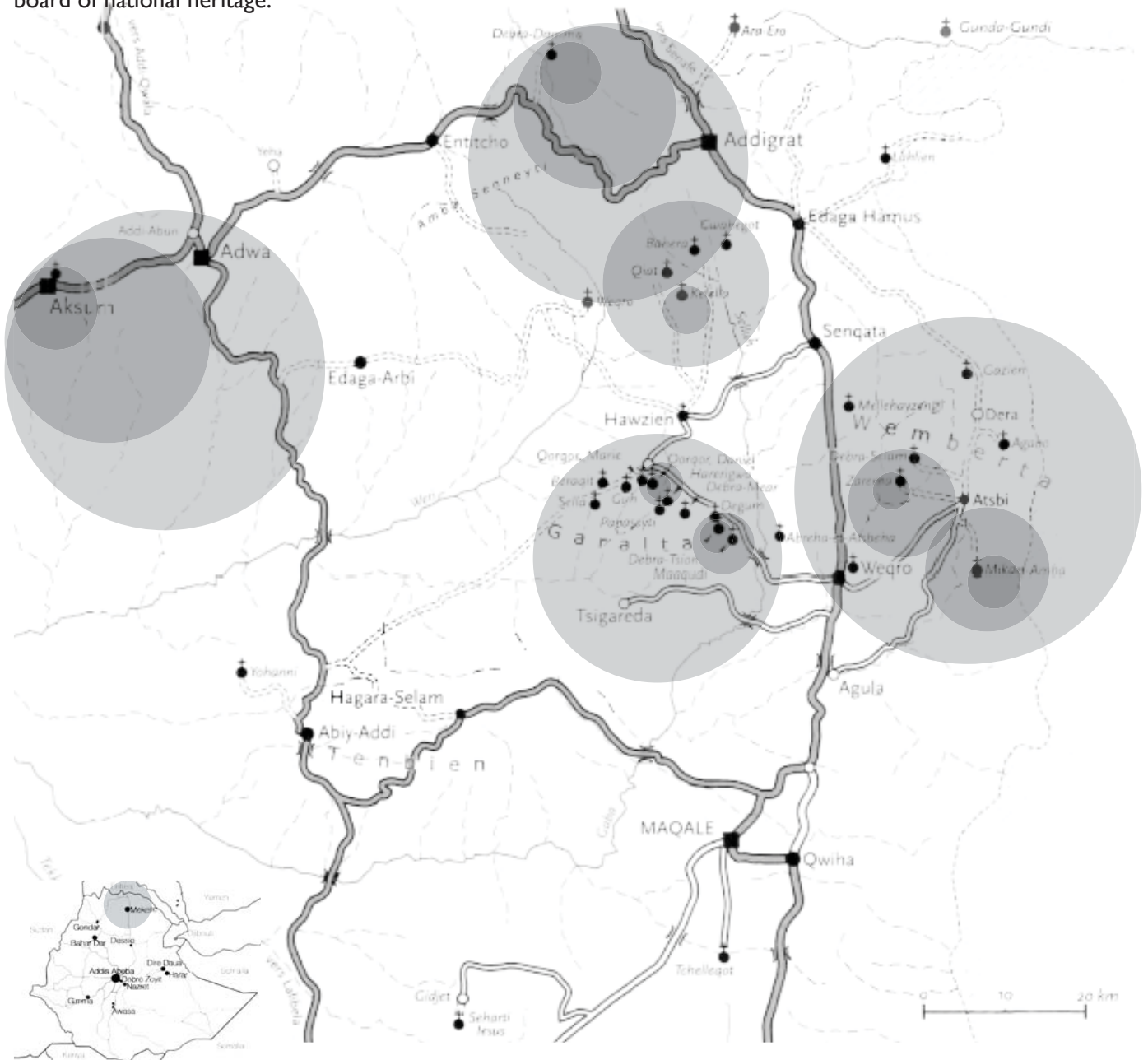
The good habit of the workshop organised with unlimitedJCA is issuing of the report booklet freely available on internet and the informal atmosphere of open doors lectures and classes where everybody is welcome to participate. As well as the final open presentation and exhibition. This year we would like to organize students screening of the projects at night at the campus and start the debate with other students from different departments to open the multi-disciplinary ex-change.

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## LOCATION:

The Tigray region is chosen as site of intervention. Its history goes as far back as the Axumite civilization in the second century BC. It is well known for its rock-hewn churches. And of course for its primacy in accepting orthodox Christianity in the 4th century AD, and for its initial accommodation of Islam in the 7th century AD. In addition the region is homeland to various spiritual and material cultures. Due to its various worth it is protected by Ethiopian board of national heritage.



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## TIMEFRAME:

One week of intense block course requires 5 months of involvement

1	3 months	aug-oct/2015	Preparation phase: concept, logistics and administrative
2	3 days	nov/2015	Preparation with involved stuff in Mekelle
3	2 days	nov/2015	Fieldtrip
4	1 week	nov/2015	Workshop with students
6	1 day	nov/2015	Public presentation (1 Friday)
7	1 day	nov/2015	Evaluation (interviewing the students, staff) and certification
8		dec/2015	Reporting

## BUDGET AND FINANCING STRATEGY

Any workshop is a remarkable affair and it demands careful planning.

The venue for the workshop is naturally a studio within the faculty of architecture.

The team is composed by the faculty staff assigned to the course and the tutor from unlimitedJCA covered by Jakub Cigler Architekti, a.s.

1. Personal Costs	free – local faculty staff assigned to the course Arch 6103 (no extra costs) free – workshop leader Michaela Solnická (salary, visa and insurance) of the workshop is covered by Jakub Cigler Architekti, a. s. (partner of the Faculty of Architecture)
2. Per Diem	No
3. Training Costs	No special training
4. Travel Costs	25 000 BIR - international return flight ticket Ouagadougou - Mekelle - Ouagadougou
5. Accommodation	free
6. Equipment	Free – projector for lectures provided by the tutor Free - Venue – studio in the architecture faculty building
7. Goods	No
8. Material	No
9. Transport	One bus ride – one day field trip
10. Contracted Services	No
11. Other Costs	1 000 BIR – public presentation snack for guests 2 000 BIR - printing of presentation posters and invitations