The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

The graduation studio of Explore Lab gives you the possibility to explore your fascination within architecture. I’m fascinated by tropical architecture, because it’s my ambition to practice architecture in my home country. Therefore I researched climate responsive design for the humid tropical country of Suriname. These results are used to design a sustainable social housing project, because the government has the ambition to build 18,000 houses on a population of approximately 600,000.

The relationship between research and design

The research consists of a manual that explains different architectural methods for a climate responsive design, which can be applied to the design of buildings in Suriname. Improving the built environment will enhance the quality of life. Researching various climate responsive design methods for the warm humid zone that can be applied in Suriname, should contribute to this improvement. The climate, vernacular architecture, methods in settlement planning and building design are some of the aspects that are researched.

The wind, sun, rain and humidity are the most important climate aspects that should be taken into consideration when designing in Suriname. Orientating openings and windows to the prevailing breeze for maximum ventilation results in a better indoor climate. Protect the building from solar radiation (heat gain) by shading or reflecting. Shelter the inhabitants from driving rain, by preventing penetration into the building. Reduce the glare and humidity for a pleasant environment in the habitat. These are some of the most important aspects to take into consideration when designing for this climate.

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework

Explore Lab gave me the opportunity to explore my passion for tropical architecture. The interesting thing about Explore Lab is that there is no standard way of advancing through the program. We are allowed, and expected, to lead ourselves through theoretical and design research. All this freedom gives
us the opportunity to develop ourselves in areas that we are genuinely interested in but it also provides obstacles. One of the obstacles is that you can easily get consumed by your fascination if you do not choose a clear direction early on. Another one is that it takes discipline and planning skills to set realistic deadlines for yourself. What I particularly enjoyed about Explore Lab was that I also had time to acquire or improve skills like Photoshop, Rhino, 3dsMax, Revit and even learned how to make websites. Having extra skills can always give you an edge when looking for a job after graduation.

The relationship between the project and the wider social context

In Suriname it is not necessary to be an architect to design a building. This ensures a lot of problems not only in the built environment, but also in the quality of the living environment. This project should inspire architects and designers in Suriname to apply climate responsive elements into their designs. Implementing this is already a step closer to a sustainable habitat in my beloved home country of Suriname.