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### **Contested Comforts: Nordic-Designed University Buildings in East Africa**

On Monday, September 27, 1976, an official ceremony was held to celebrate the completion of a new student housing building at the University of Botswana and Swaziland. The ceremony gathered high-rank public officials and, in addition to the choral singing, featured the address of the Norwegian Ambassador R.K. Andresen and an acceptance speech by Botswana's Vice President Dr Quett Ketumile Joni Masire. In his talk, Masire underlined the difference between local and Western educational models and emphasised that in a country like Botswana, university education has to primarily respond to the "manpower needs of the Botswana economy."<sup>1</sup> Within the context of limited resources, the construction of new teaching facilities, lecture theatres and labs were prioritised, while student housing and spaces for individual study and sports were deemed secondary. In this case, Masire expressed profound gratitude for the people of Norway, who stepped in and sponsored the construction of a new student housing block.

So why was a small Nordic country building student housing in such a remote part of the world? Following the 1960s wave of independence, newly established African states embarked on rebuilding their statehoods and infrastructures. Education was intricately intertwined with the process of nation-building as hundreds of elementary and technical schools, teachers' colleges, and universities were constructed across the region. University buildings, in particular, became hotbeds of intellectual advancement and played an important symbolic role in projecting new notions of statehood.<sup>2</sup> Ambitious in their scope, however, they required significant investments. Often, the funds were provided either by

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<sup>1</sup> Acceptance Speech Given by the Vice President of Botswana, Dr Q. K. J. Masire at the Official Opening of the DH Hostel at the Botswana College of UBS on Monday, September 27, 1976. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0052, series RA-S-6670, NORAD archives in Riksarkivet (Norwegian State Archives), Oslo, Norway.

<sup>2</sup> Tim Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), 2. Kofi Adjei and Rexford A. Oppong, *Analysis of Ornamentations in Modernist and Postmodernist Building Infrastructure: A Case Study Of Kwame Nkrumah University Of Science And Technology (KNUST)*, Proceedings of ICIDA 2017 – 6th International Conference on Infrastructure Development in Africa—12-14 April 2017, KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana, 436. Ola Uduku, Kuukuwa Manful, "Building for Higher Education in Africa," in *Docomomo Journal* 69 (2023), 4-5. See *Docomomo Journal*, "Shared Heritage" no. 69, v.2 (2023).

multilateral organisations like the World Bank with its lending branches or through bilateral agreements with individual countries. However, these acts of “benevolence” came with a cost. “Lending” or “gifting” frameworks strongly impacted both the content of educational programs and the physical appearance of new university buildings, translating Western techno-scientific paradigms and projections of need and comfort.

Beyond their representational function, new universities were everyday buildings inhabited by students, educators, and administrative staff. Their designs, often conceived by local bureaucrats and sponsored through the networks of international organisations, represent a complex matrix of concepts of “need” as perceived and projected from different vantage points. The essay sets forth to investigate these contested visions of need through two projects of student dormitories built in Tanzania and Zambia in the 1970s through the networks of Norwegian foreign aid. Different constellations of bureaucratic actors mediated between different projections of “need,” turning these projections into the lived reality of everyday buildings.

### **The Norwegian Good Will**

Nordic Involvement in East Africa began in the early 1960s with the establishment of an inter-parliamentary ministerial council, Nordisk Råd, which joined the efforts of respective Nordic organisations. Newly independent countries in East Africa—Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda—were chosen as “focus areas” based on the principle of geographic concentration.<sup>3</sup> Within the post-war geopolitical divides, Nordic countries strove to fashion a new image of “humane internationalists,” which was also a means to forge new soft power alliances through generous international aid packages intended to fill the space created by withdrawing colonial powers.<sup>4</sup> Norwegian urban theorist Karl Otto Ellefsen, discussing Nordic involvement in the region, argued that it could be seen as an extension of the tradition of protestant missionaries, which strove to impose “good” by transferring ideas,

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<sup>3</sup> NORAD, *Dette bør du vite om norsk u-hjelp* (Oslo: NORAD, 1978), 8–17. More on the “official” principles see “Nordiska Rådet. Medlemsförslag. A 484/e,” Box Xa-0010 Nordisk Samarbeids råd, in RA/S-6306/X/Xa, Departementet for utviklingshjelp archive, Riksarkivet, Oslo, Norway.

<sup>4</sup> Sunniva Engh, “The ‘Nordic Model’ in international development aid: explanation, experience and export,” in *The Making and Circulation of Nordic Models, Ideas and Images* (London: Routledge, 2021), 125-126.

knowledge and money.<sup>5</sup> There was a shared belief among the Nordic politicians that the social-democratic model could be exported and translated into practical use in a different geographic context—however, also with the benefit for the domestic political market.<sup>6</sup> Projects in education and healthcare were prioritised since they also contributed to creating the idea of the North based on “common goodwill” while fostering a soft power presence in the region.<sup>7</sup> By 1965, Nordisk Råd completed a large Kibaha project in Tanzania (then Tanganyika) that integrated education, healthcare and agriculture, making the “Nordic spirit” (i.e. generosity of means) well-known in the region.<sup>8</sup> NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for International Development, administered the Kibaha project on behalf of the Nordic countries and, capitalising on its success, expanded political influence in the region.

Following agreements on “Technical Cooperation,” Norwegian specialists embarked on new careers within Tanzanian state institutions while NORAD pursued new large regional projects. According to the principle of Norwegian aid, requests for assistance had to come from the “recipient” country, shaped by their needs and priorities.<sup>9</sup> However, this separation was often less clear-cut since Norwegians were interested in only specific projects associated with deliberately “good” humanitarian functions. This was particularly true for the extraordinary ordinances, such as the Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Fund, collected in an impromptu nationwide crowd-funding campaign following the tragic aeroplane crash of the Swedish UN Secretary-General.<sup>10</sup> With its track record with international aid, NORAD was asked to administer the funds on the condition that it was “to finance an activity within the educational sector somewhere in the less developed part of the world.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Karl Otto Ellefsen, “Countryside Reconstruction in Postcolonial Africa, The Ujamaa Experience,” note 8, in Nina Berre (ed.) *African Modernism and Its Afterlives* (Bristol: Intellect Books Ltd, 2022), 83.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Also in Knut Gunnar Nustad, *Gavens makt: norsk utviklingshjelp som formynderskap* (Oslo: Pax, 2003), 56–57, also in Engh, “The Nordic Model,” 128.

<sup>7</sup> Nordiska Rådet, “Medlemförslag om samberkan ved regionala project i utvicklingsländerna,” Sak A 28, 9:e sessionen 1961, Box Xa-0009, Series RA/S-6306/X/Xa.

<sup>8</sup> NORAD, *Norden og Tanzania: Kibaha 10 år* (Oslo: NORAD, 1973). “Nordisk felles bistand til utviklingslandene,” PG/OdB/ta23.11.71, Box Xa-0015, Series RA/S-6306/X/Xa.

<sup>9</sup> Lennart Wohlgemuth, *The Nordic Countries and Africa—Old and New Relations* (Nordic Africa Institute, Elanders Digitaltryck AB; Göteborg, 2002), 36–37.

<sup>10</sup> Dag Hammarskjöld was a Swedish economist and diplomat who served as a Second Secretary of the United Nations from April 1953 until September 1961, when he died in a plane crash accident en route to negotiating a cease-fire in Congo. In Norway, his death was followed by a nationwide im-prompt crowd-funding campaign. See more in Roger Lipsey, *Hammarskjöld: A Life* (University of Michigan Press: 2013).

<sup>11</sup> At the time, the Dag Hammarskjöld funding amounted to 3,6 mln NOK, a significant amount in reference to other NORAD projects. For example, the total expenditure of NORAD in Tanzania from 1971 to 1974 was 18,2 mln NOK. See more in the description of DH Foundation in “Address by R.K. Andersen, Ambassador of Norway, September 1976,” in E/Ea/ Eaa-L0052. For a comparison of program costs, see “NORAD/Tanzania Programme 1971-1974. Specification of projects.” In E/Ea/ Eaa-L0319.

The case of the Foundation is not entirely reflective of NORAD's operations but is particularly revealing of the nature of Norwegian aid. The many behind-the-scenes bureaucratic documents underline the conditional nature of the gift: it had to have a distinguishable educational aspect, benefit more than one country in Africa, and have a clear "Nordic" identification. The outlined pursuit of "technical and economic development" implicitly imposed relational hierarchies along the lines of "development" between the donor and the recipient. The Foundation insisted that the means could not be used for a larger project and that the result had to bear the name of Dag Hammarskjöld, making apparent the performative nature of the gift.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the gift had to be read as a gift, and it had to be good. After several less-than-successful attempts, NORAD picked some cues from the World Bank and decided that the means were to address the "uncovered need" for university housing at new university projects in East Africa.<sup>13</sup>

### **British-Norwegian Tropics**

Archival evidence shows that this framing of "uncovered need" did not originate from the recipients but was defined and solicited by NORAD.<sup>14</sup> In the context of limited means, however, university representatives were happy to receive any financial assistance. Several Norwegian building projects in Tanzania were already underway, including a series of secondary boarding schools, the extension to the Chemistry building, and new lecture halls at the University of Dar-es-Salaam campus (UDSM).<sup>15</sup> The dormitory project was a part of an extensive master-plan construction of the UDSM campus, described by the Dutch architect Antoni Folkers as a "gift to Tanzania by the Western countries."<sup>16</sup> The University was to construct the new building, while NORAD maintained the administrative function. With no in-house construction expertise, NORAD appointed an engineer from its usual partner, Norconsult, a large Norwegian engineering consultancy which, in the 1960s, developed a

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<sup>12</sup> "Dag Hammarskjölds minnefond—förslag til benyttelse," 17 October 1969, SD-80/69, in E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>13</sup> "Dag Hammarskjölds minnefond," in E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>14</sup> See a letter from R.K. Andresen, to NORAD Resident Representatives in Dar es Salaam, Kampala and Nairobi. "EJ/Lj", 19 September 1969. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>15</sup> See descriptions of NORAD-Tanzania projects in "Notat" from Plan to C/Pro, 3 September 1970, EJ/kt in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>16</sup> Antoni Folkers, *Moderne architectuur in Afrika* (Amsterdam: SUN; 2010), 171. In Kim De Raedt, "School Building as Development Aid in Postcolonial Sub-Saharan Africa" (PhD Diss., University of Ghent, 2017), 25.

symbiotic relationship with NORAD operations.<sup>17</sup> Most of the architectural decisions about the project were then taken by NORAD's resident administrator, Jon Aase, in consultation with engineer Bjærum from Norconsult.<sup>18</sup> Norman and Dawbarn, a British architectural firm with extensive experience in the region from the British colonial administration, produced the project drawings.<sup>19</sup>

The many bureaucratic documents reveal different understandings of the notions of "need" and "comfort" maintained by various actors within the project. For the British architecture firm, well-versed in the ideas of "tropical architecture," it was essential to achieve passive ventilation.<sup>20</sup> The proposed design then formed a four-story building split into two sections joined by a breezeway. The building was orientated along the East-West axis, but the sections were slightly offset to assist the penetration of cooling breezes.<sup>21</sup> However, given the project's limited means, the architects were convinced that "if the reasonable standard of accommodation and finish is to be achieved, then some form of double banking of rooms around a central corridor will be inevitable."<sup>22</sup> For Norman and Dawbarn, this was not an ideal solution since, given the building and Dar-es-Salaam's orientation, several rooms would be poorly served by cross ventilation. However, double-banking meant that the design afforded the bare minimum floor space for the students. From the limited archival correspondence, it is possible to learn that "university and student representatives were constantly against this solution."<sup>23</sup> However, with the push from the Ministry of Education and Tanzanian Treasury, NORAD approved the designs.

Eventually, the student dormitory was built in four storeys, with each floor designed as an independent unit of 17 double student rooms, accommodating 136 students.<sup>24</sup> The

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<sup>17</sup> See Norconsult project list in the offer to the University of Nairobi, "Physical Science Building," 23 December 1971, from NORCONSULT A/S, in E/Ea/Eaa-L0168.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example a letter from Jon Aase, NORAD Resident Representative in Tanzania to Principal Secretary of the Treasury, 7 December 1970. See also "Projects at the University of Dar es Salaam," a letter from O. Bjærum to NORAD Resident Representative, 8 December 1970. All in E/Ea/ Eaa-L0319.

<sup>19</sup> More on Norman and Dawbarn see Ewan Harrison, Iain Jackson, "African Agency and Colonial Committees at Fourah Bay College: Architecture and planning of the new Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone," *Docomomo Journal* 69 (2023): 18.

<sup>20</sup> The ideas of "tropical architecture" and "thermal comfort" were problematic from their inception, as was extensively discussed by Hannah le Roux. See Hannah le Roux, "The networks of tropical architecture," *The Journal of Architecture*, 8:3 (2003): 337-354. Also Jiat-Hwee Chang and Daniel J. Ryan, "Historicizing Entanglements of Architecture and Comfort beyond the Temperate Zone," *Architecture Beyond Europe* 17 (2020), parts 1 and 2. <https://doi.org/10.4000/abe.7998>

<sup>21</sup> See "University of Dar es Salaam—Dag Hammarskjöld's House," a project description by architects forwarded by Aase, 23 February 1971. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>22</sup> "University of Dar es Salaam—Dag Hammarskjöld's House," in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>23</sup> Jon Aase, to NORAD, "University of Dar es Salaam. Dag Hammarskjöld's Minnefond," 21 January 1971. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>24</sup> "University of Dar es Salaam—Dag Hammarskjöld's House," in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

entrance hall with a staircase was placed centrally, with the entrance doubling as a breezeway. The architects aimed to inscribe the building into the existing setting of the University and emphasised the “saw tooth” motive found elsewhere. Each room had two bunk beds, and each student was provided with a writing desk, a chair and book shelving, a fitted wardrobe, some pinboard space, and a shared corner closet.<sup>25</sup> Each section of the rooms had three WCs with showers and washbasins. A workroom, domestic cleaning facilities, and cleaners' cupboard were located in the West section.<sup>26</sup> The architects aimed to apply the same dimensional standards, standardised finishes, colours and surface textures across the project.<sup>27</sup> The construction was based on load-bearing concrete and brick walls, with reinforced concrete floor and roof slabs. The external walls were finished in Tyrolean render since a brushed terrazzo finish was deemed too expensive. Internally, all floors were finished with sand-cement screed, walls and ceilings rendered, and finished with emulsion paint.<sup>28</sup>

The building was completed in less than a year, within the allocated budget and with little to no construction issues.<sup>29</sup> However, from the final design, it was clear that only the bare minimum standards for student accommodation were met, and the students' needs were not considered. When Norwegian engineer Bjærum approved the designs, he mentioned that the British architects' firm enjoyed a “good reputation” in the country.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Norman and Dawbarn's liking with the Tanzanian administration hinged on their “brilliant job in keeping within the estimates.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, they could make buildings cheap. Norwegian architects, who had collaborated with Norman and Dawbarn on different projects in Tanzania, were more sceptical about their work. They often described their British colleagues' school designs as drab, dull, “too formal,” and “old-fashioned.”<sup>32</sup> While the pragmatic Norconsult engineer found British designs satisfactory, a Norwegian architect reviewing a similar proposal for another Norwegian-Tanzanian school project found that it

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<sup>25</sup> “University of Dar es Salaam—Dag Hammarskjöld's House,” in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>26</sup> “University of Dar es Salaam—Dag Hammarskjöld's House,” in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>27</sup> “University of Dar es Salaam—Dag Hammarskjöld's House,” in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>28</sup> “University of Dar es Salaam—Dag Hammarskjöld's House,” in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>29</sup> See “Monthly Technical Report on Projects: 31<sup>st</sup> July 1972,” in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>30</sup> “Projects at the University of Dar es Salaam,” Bjærum to NORAD, 8 December 1970, in E/Ea/Eaa-L0319.

<sup>31</sup> Ewan Harrison, Iain Jackson, “African Agency and Colonial Committees at Fourah Bay College: Architecture and planning of the new Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone,” in *Docomomo Journal* 69 (2023): 18.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, discussions around Nordic-sponsored secondary schools in Tanzania, including Sengerema and Songea. Bremer, “Concerning the Sengerema School,” in E/Ea/Eaa-L0330.

reminded of “boarding schools of old times, associated with bad psychological influences” and did not live up to “the standards of educational environments of today.”<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, in the case of UDSM student housing, NORAD received what it wanted: a new building done in the name of Dag Hammarskjöld’s Foundation, emanating “good” Norwegian intentions, carried out within set budgets and without delays. So what if the students were provided the bare minimum and their needs were not considered?

### **World Bank’s Architectural Austerity**

Nearly identical project agreements were concluded for student dormitories in Nairobi, Kampala and Lusaka. The latter, in particular, offers a unique insight into how international donors abstracted projections of “need.” Since its independence in 1964, with its stable and robust economy, Zambia has been included in the World Bank’s list of countries targeted for “education potential.”<sup>34</sup> Following the UNESCO “identification mission,” the First Zambia World Bank Education Project focusing on secondary schools was appraised in 1968.<sup>35</sup> The Second Zambia World Bank Education Project followed a year later, including expansion to the School of Engineering and Education at the University of Zambia in Lusaka.<sup>36</sup> Set against the projected “manpower” calculations and economic needs, the University was to increase enrolment and provide accommodation for an additional 960 students.<sup>37</sup> For the Bank, school facilities beyond classrooms were necessary insofar as they yielded “better student performance, and, consequently, a lower cost per student.”<sup>38</sup> Good student housing education could be translated to more productive “participation in extra-curricular activities and better health.” Architectural qualities of the built environment were then reduced to quantifiable gains of “manpower” potential and tangible productivity gains.

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<sup>33</sup> Bremer, “Concerning the Sengerema,” in E/Ea/Eea-L0330.

<sup>34</sup> De Raedt, “Policies, People, Projects,” 116.

<sup>35</sup> See “Appraisal of an Educational Project in Zambia (Second Education Project). October 29, 1969,” IBRD files, Loan 545-ZA.

<sup>36</sup> “Project Performance Audit Report. Zambia First and Second Education Projects (Loans 592-ZA and 645-ZA). May 20, 1983,” Report no. 4508, World Bank Files.

<sup>37</sup> “Project Performance Audit Report,” 1980, World Bank Files.

<sup>38</sup> “Appraisal of an Educational Project in Zambia,” 1969, IBRD files.

NORAD, already involved in the First World Bank Project, was to contribute to the Second: one of the student dormitory buildings was to bear the name Dag Hammarskjöld.<sup>39</sup> Similarly to Dar-es-Salaam, Lusaka campus development was a part of a larger master-plan university construction project, designed by the South African architect Jilian Elliott, supervised by the University's resident architect, another South African I. O. Horvitch, and paid for by a combination of British money and World Bank loans.<sup>40</sup> Once again, the University was to handle the construction while NORAD maintained an observatory function.<sup>41</sup> The Project Unit had already designed two types of dorms—type A for 90 students and type B for 62 students, arranged in four series of six buildings. The latter cost exactly 1,061,000 NOK, which made it fit right into the Foundation's criteria.<sup>42</sup> As the project was already underway, NORAD's central office was initially sceptical of subscribing to the design of "a randomly planned building."<sup>43</sup> However, the competitive costs of the project—since it was included in a "wholesale" set-up of the World Bank project—persuaded the NORAD representatives.<sup>44</sup> Eventually, Norconsult approved the drawings and the cost estimates, and the project was carried out under the general Bank framework.<sup>45</sup>

From the project's start, the Bank emphasised "that only the essential requirements would be included in the project and met at the lowest possible cost."<sup>46</sup> Thus, the buildings' spatial standards were reduced to an "austere minimum," and "utmost economy" was used in planning circulation spaces and the layout of the buildings. Each cluster of hostel buildings housed 240 students, with two students in each room of 130 square feet, compared with 165 square feet in the University's existing residences. A minimum acceptable allowance was made for circulation space and walls. The student common rooms were reduced to 1,200 sq ft compared to 1,600 in the existing buildings.<sup>47</sup> Dag

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<sup>39</sup> Halvor Fossum to NORAD, "Dag Hammarskjölds Minnefond—Støtte til studenthjem ved University of Zambia, Lusaka," 5 October 1969. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>40</sup> De Raedt, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Jon Aase to NORAD, "Dag Hammarskjølds Minnefond — University of Zambia," 18 November 1969. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>42</sup> Jon Aase to NORAD, "Dag Hammarskjølds Minnefond," in E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>43</sup> G. Mjaugedal, "Internt Notat," 10 November 1970, "Dag Hammarskjølds Minnefond. Studenthjem University of Zambia." In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>44</sup> G. Mjaugedal, "Internt Notat," in Eaa-L0585.

<sup>45</sup> Halldor Heldal, NORAD "University of Zambia—Dag Hammarskjølds House," 26 May 1971. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>46</sup> "Appraisal of an Educational Project in Zambia," 1969, IBRD files.

<sup>47</sup> "Appraisal of an Educational Project in Zambia," 1969, IBRD files.



Hammarskjöld's dormitory was one of the 24 identical buildings within the project. The hostel was built in four storeys, with a total floor area of 700 m<sup>2</sup>, accommodating 31 two-men rooms. The structure was done in load-carrying brickwork with concrete slabs. The internal walls were finished with wood float and plaster, while the external walls were finished with Terranova plaster. The ceilings were unfinished concrete, and the flat roofs were covered with asphalt. Window and door frames were made of metal, and, as the architects noted, "the overall standard of craftsmanship was good."<sup>48</sup> Inspecting the finished building, NORAD's local representative, Ola Dørum, found the residence hall "solid and functionally well-done, without any defects to see."<sup>49</sup> However, as Dørum also noted, the rooms "after our standards are very small—10-12 m<sup>2</sup> but are nice and satisfactorily equipped."<sup>50</sup> Once again, the needs of the Norwegian foundation were met—with a plaque of Dag Hammarskjöld commemorating the contribution. In contrast, the needs of the students were met at the most austere standard, hardly comparable with the architecture of any Norwegian student residence at the time.

### **The Frivolous Well-Being**

A small coda about the leftover funds of the Foundation serves as a suitable conclusion. Because of its bare minimum standards, the building on the Lusaka campus was 30% cheaper than its counterparts in East African countries. New debates then ensued within NORAD on what to do with the leftover money. Lusaka University representatives suggested a contribution towards constructing the University pool since there was only one swimming pool in Lusaka and, without the public transport connection, the students could not access it. The correspondence emphasised, "It would be a real contribution to improve students' well-being."<sup>51</sup> NORAD's central office, however, found the suggestion too frivolous and not in

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<sup>48</sup> Norconsult, "Dag Hammarskjöld Residential Hall. Status as per 1<sup>st</sup> October 1971," Norconsult A/S, Lusaka, 4 October 1971. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>49</sup> Ola Dørum, "ZAM 301—Dag Hammarskjølds studentinternat," Resident representative to NORAD, 16 October 1974. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>50</sup> Dørum, "ZAM 301—Dag Hammarskjølds studentinternat." In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>51</sup> "Dag Hammarskjöld's Minnefond—Anvendelse av udisponert restbeløp," Royal Norwegian Embassy, Nairobi, 2 February 1972. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

line with Dag Hammarskjöld's thinking.<sup>52</sup> Suggestions for an urgently needed Student Centre were also rejected, as lacking the educational component. Eventually, NORAD decided to sponsor the construction of yet another student hostel in Botswana.<sup>53</sup> The project was prepared and executed by the Gaborone-based Mozambique architect Jose Forjaz.<sup>54</sup>

From this small coda, it is possible to see that the concept of "need" is ultimately utterly political. Who decides what is needed, and who knows what is needed most? This unequal political dynamic became increasingly apparent within international architectural projects carried under the name of "development." The decisions on what needed to be built and what was "needed" by the recipient were most often made from the comfort of the international offices in Oslo or New York, a world apart. Norwegian insistence on singular, easily identifiable "humanitarian" projects underlined the performativity of such aid and the unwillingness to listen to the actual needs. The exact needs of the recipients—barely traceable voices of the students and University administrators in bureaucratic archives—were ignored as not "serious" and not "educational" enough. Institutions like the World Bank translated the perceived educational needs into abstract numerical models, where the quality of lived architectural spaces was deemed secondary to the potentially quantifiable gains of "manpower." The University administrators internalised and ascribed to the Western-formulated projections of "need," disregarding the everyday experience of the buildings in favour of optimised financial flows. Within these pragmatic financial dynamics, spatial standards defining "needs" became both a flexible and a political tool, as Norwegian engineers approved of projects that would never be acceptable at home. Let this story of Norwegian university housing projects in Africa be a cautionary tale to all architects working without hearing the "needs."

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<sup>52</sup> Halldor Heldal, "The Use of uncommitted amount form Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Fund," a letter from NORAD to Mr. E.A. Ulzen, Registrar, University of Zambia, 28 March, 1972. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>53</sup> V. Isaksen, "Notat. Anvendelse av Dag Hammarskjöld Minnefond in Zambia," from C/Pro 11 to C/Pro, 7 February 1974. Also see S. Haadem, "Dag Hammarskjölds Minnefond — Disponering av restebeløpet," 3 July 1974, a letter to the ambassador R. Hancke. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0585.

<sup>54</sup> Jose Forjaz, Architect, "University Campus at Gaborone, Botswana. Bills of Quantities for Erection and Completion of the Dag Hammarskjöld Hotel Block," June 1975. In E/Ea/Eaa-L0052.